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THE FAITH OF THE MILLIONS.

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THE FAITH OF THE MILLIONS

A SELECTION OF PAST ESSAYS

BY

GEORGE TYRRELL, S.J.

FIRST SERIES

Third Edition

"AND SEEING THE MULTITUDES HE WAS MOVED WITH COMPASSION ON THEM, FOR THEY WERE HARASSED AND SCATTERED AS SHEEP HAVING NO SHEPHERD."

(*Matthew* ix. 36.)

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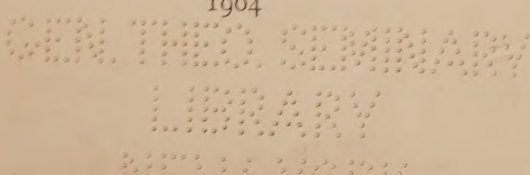

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INTRODUCTION.

THIS Introduction may be regarded as in some sort the long-deferred continuation of the essay, entitled *Tracts for the Million*, in which it is maintained that the conditions wherein we are placed in these modernized countries, justify some effort to meet the religious questionings of the semi-educated in a way adapted rather to their incapacity than to the demands of better-informed and more cultivated minds. We hold, however, that this can be at most a temporary palliative, but never a radical remedy against the spreading epidemic of unbelief. Sand-barriers may retard the advancing tide here and there, but eventually it creeps round and over. History shows us that the beliefs of the masses (we are not dealing with units in this discussion) follow,

at a certain distance of time, the beliefs of those who lead or form public opinion—that eventually the many depend upon the few, and the glaciers formed on the hills slip down to the valleys. Hence, the constant and wise endeavour of the Church in the interests of the dependent crowds, to secure a Christianized public opinion, if not necessarily a Christianized government. At first, she drew the multitudes by her miracles, by the death of her martyrs; by the glow of her primitive purity and fervour; nay, even by the very freshness and novelty of her ideas and methods: but as soon as she had captured the leaders of the people—as soon as the Empire was Christianized, the need of these extraordinary credentials ceased with the establishment of the normal and ordinary conditions. Now that the difficulties of the primitive period bid fair to recur, and the power of public opinion is passing over from the side of faith to that of doubt, dragging the fluent multitude after it as the sea is dragged by the moon, it would seem natural to look for remedy either in a renewal of

those preternatural energies whence the Church derived that initial impetus on which she has lived ever since; or else in an endeavour to reverse the present current of public opinion by acting upon those who determine it, and not merely on those who are determined by it. But besides the enormous practical difficulty of giving effect to the latter method, there are some other objections to be considered.

First of all, the appeal of faith to reason and intelligence must be put in its proper place, which is secondary and conditional, not primary and causal. The "wish to believe," the *pius credulitatis affectus*, is the impulsive and effectual cause of faith; the intellectual justification is but a liberating condition. The mere reasonableness of believing cannot stir the will; yet without it, the will cannot act reasonably or truthfully. Plainly then, whether we address ourselves to the man in the street or to the man in the study, our first appeal must be to the will and affections; our first endeavour must

be to create and strengthen the wish to believe; for this is the force which is liberated by reason, and it must exist before it can be set free. And the wish to believe—the interest in religion, like every other interest, implies that the facts proposed for belief are felt to bear intimately upon the life and substantial happiness of the would-be believer, that they constitute the kind of world or system in which he would wish to live. Just therefore, in the measure that a religion is clearly shown to be closely bound up with life as actually lived, to be, literally, of *vital* importance, will men be stirred to inquire about it, and to wish that it may be true. So long as this connection between faith and life is obscure or wholly invisible, the religious problem will concern none but the intellectual *dilettante*. In politics we are but parrots repeating catch-words by rote, until such time as the life of our country begins to live in us and its interests to be felt as our own—until our private and separate life is in some way touched to the quick by the public or political

life. So with religion. "To whom shall we go?" says Peter. "Thou hast the words of eternal *life*." Not that the felt needs, moral and spiritual, of any soul are to be the measure and exclusive criterion of faith; for religion must not only satisfy and equal, but must transcend and promise to expand indefinitely man's higher spiritual capacities. But it must also, inclusively, satisfy and equal them. Else it is merely a system imposed from outside—seed cast on the hard surface, without root or vital connection with the actual life of the mind and heart. Religion may be held in this external way, but it is held insecurely, without interest, without love. Thus, it is not enough to teach our children their catechism, or to drill them in religious observances, unless we try to connect their religion with the fibres of their incipient life, to make them really interested about it and spontaneously attached to it. This spontaneous wish to believe will do more to make them impervious to the miasma of doubt, than could any elementary apologetic whose necessary insuffi-

ciency, once realized, might otherwise destroy all their trust in their early training. And the same obviously applies to the faithful generally, whose intellectual grasp of their religion, were it never so firm, will not protect them in the absence of a deep-rooted and intelligent attachment to it.

To bring home the vital interest of religion, whether to believers or to unbelievers, whether to the simple many or to the cultured few, is partly a work of exposition, and has been for this reason erroneously confounded with apologetic. To show, with Chateaubriand and others, that religion is good and beautiful, is to appeal to the will and affections—to excite the "wish to believe;" but to show that it is also true, or credible, is to appeal to the intellect—to justify and liberate the pent-up will. And this latter is more properly called apologetic.

Yet the exposition of what religion *ought* to do for the individual and for society is of little effect unless re-enforced by experimental proof of what it actually does. Nothing

stimulates the wish to believe so much as the visible fruits and advantages of belief shown in the lives of the faithful. It is to this kind of controversy that Christ chiefly recommends His cause, when He says: "Let your light so shine before men"—not that they may see your good arguments, but "that they may see your good works." Nor would all His miracles have proved His claim to be a "teacher sent from God," had He not first shown Himself to be the Way and the Life, no less than the Truth. For so far as it is ever an effectual proof, a miracle is but an appeal to the intellect, liberating the previously excited "wish to believe;" it is a brief and practical "apologetic" suited to the rudest mind.

Nowhere more than in business-like England, where the distrust of dialectic is so profound and the appeal to palpable results so decisive, have we need to strengthen this all-important argument *ex fructibus*, if we are to draw others or keep those we have. If believers are, in the gross, notoriously more just, truthful, charitable, beneficent, and tem-

perate than unbelievers; if invisible, supernatural virtue is thus proved to include, presuppose, strengthen, and refine that which is natural and visible, to be a light shining before men, and not merely before God; then the apologist may enter hopefully upon his labours; he has only to raise the sluice and free the gathered waters.

We insist on these important platitudes lest we should be suspected of even the faintest bias towards that kind of false "intellectualism" which hangs the cause of religion upon a slender string of syllogisms. Still, there is a no less false quietism to be combated, which tells us, in effect, to read à Kempis and to say our prayers and leave the rest to God. That after we have done all in our power, after we have sown and watered, we must wait upon God for the weather and the increase, is plain enough; but it is the limiting of our co-operation to personal piety that must be disputed. After the wish to believe has been created and strengthened, there are purely mental obstacles

to belief, such as, ignorance and misapprehension which, so far as we can, we are certainly bound to remove, just as we should be morally bound to remove a stumbling-block from the path of the blind. The birth and growth of the Church's technical theology proves her practical recognition of this duty. Certain Christian rationalists look upon the moulding of primitive Christianity into the forms of Greek thought as, of course, an inevitable corruption of its original simplicity; and yet as the needful condition of its preservation and subsequent triumph as a world-conquering religion. Like some soft molluscous creature, it had to creep into the nearest convenient shell to save itself from being devoured or dashed to pieces. We read the facts differently, in the light of the parables of the mustard-seed and of the hidden leaven, and see "intention" guiding the process from first to last. For the leaven is not designed to remain apart in its strength, but to be hidden, buried, and weakened in the unleavened mass, and by a slow struggle, to pass from

seeming defeat and annihilation to triumphant victory and self-assertion.

Montanism was the denial of this principle in the moral order. But as Christians had to go forth into the world, like sheep in the midst of wolves, in order to apply the morality of the Sermon on the Mount to the problems of all places and ages, and thereby to develop and reveal the content—the inexhaustible vitality and flexibility of Christ's Way and Life; so, for the same end, His Truth needed translation into the lip-language and thought-language of every nation and time and level of culture.

From the sub-Apostolic age onwards, the Christian Church has both implicitly and explicitly repudiated that sort of intellectual quietism or agnosticism which is the counter-fallacy to gnosticism or intellectualism. Hers is always a sane *Via Media*. She endeavours steadily to bring every kind and type of intellect into captivity to Christ; to understand the mental forms and presuppositions of every dominant school of thought, and to utilize them

for the expression and illustration of her teaching. Scholasticism—the translation of theology into the fashionable mind-language of those days—is in some ways the most monumental instance in point—being a more unexpected, deliberate, and reflex accommodation of sacred matter to secular form than that effected, almost unconsciously, in the second and third centuries.

Against all this the quietist will protest that God has not willed to save His elect by logic; that the Gospel is preached to the poor and simple, and hidden from the wise and prudent. Nor can it well be denied that Christ's attitude towards those who sat in the chair of Moses—towards the theologians and casuists of the Jewish religion, was one of almost uncompromising hostility; that this very antagonism of spirit and principle was the proximate cause of His murder at their hands. His denunciations of their formalism, their unreality, their trivial pedantry and hair-splitting, their lack of all sympathy with the quickening spirit of pure religion, their slavish

letter-worship, their lust of domination, were persistent and almost fierce. He beheld with compassion the multitudes wandering and harassed, as sheep having no shepherd, because their leaders were blind leaders, keeping the key of the kingdom of knowledge ; not entering themselves, nor suffering others to enter.

But in all this the quietist can find no solid basis for his contention, arguing as he does from the morbid and corrupt, as though it were the sound and normal. It was not with the dogmatic and ecclesiastical system in its natural vigour that Christ was at war, but in its state of inevitable decay, when it had grown old and stiff and had lost that flexibility and power of accommodation to changing surroundings, which is the most distinctive evidence of life. He came not to destroy, nor even to disembody the imperishable spirit of the divine law, but to expand it and re-embody it in a more liberal and adequate utterance ; for though the letter without the spirit kills ; yet the spirit cannot quicken without the letter. His quarrel was with Rabbinism, not with

theology; with rationalism, not with reason. Nor, if He found apter pupils of the Gospel among the rude and unlettered was it because ignorance and unintelligence were appropriate or necessary conditions of faith and spiritual insight, but because ignorance was less of an obstacle to light than false learning; and mental deficiencies, than moral. If He chose the foolish it was not to leave them foolish, but to make them wiser than their official teachers.

It is then only a most superficial reading of the Gospel that could find in it a plea for obscurantism, or a condemnation of that faith that strives after intelligence.

If therefore it is justifiable, expedient, and imperative for us, here and now, to strive to do what the Church has done so wonderfully and fruitfully in the past; to acquire the knowledge, to understand the thought, of our own day, and to appropriate them to the illustration and expression of the faith; to address the intelligence of these times in its own language and on its own presuppositions; if we may appeal to reason at all, we should surely appeal to the

highest and best as well as, or in preference to, the lowest; we should go to the root of the evil instead of endlessly nipping-off buds; we should care chiefly to influence those who influence others—who lead the fashions in opinion and taste; who determine and modify that mass of public beliefs which is the rule of faith for the millions. Strangely enough, those who are most distressed about the falling away of the multitudes, who are most clamorous for popular lectures and tracts on Christian Defence, are often disposed to regard more profound and wide-reaching efforts in precisely the same genus as symptomatic of a diseased intellectualism; and while they are urgent that the unbelief of the ill-educated should be dealt with controversially, they are scandalized at any attempt to meet the more cultivated intelligence on its own ground; as though the Gospel blessed reason so long only as it was popular and more or less sophistical, but banned it the moment it became searching and critical. Such a view is plainly the result of mere hesitancy and confusion of mind, and possibly of that

general reluctance to accept a conclusion that entails new and burdensome duties to which we feel ourselves unequal.

If, then, we address ourselves at all to the intelligence of the world, our first care in the interest of the millions must be to address ourselves to the best intelligence, that is, to the few; we must make it evident that Christ is the only Way to the Father, just because He is at once the Truth and the Life—the highest perfection of the human mind and the human will; we must show that, as à Kempis says without that Way there is no going; without that Truth there is no knowing; without that Life there is no living; for as long as Christianity is viewed as something complete in itself, which is put beside, or on top of, natural humanity — something equally complete in itself — it cannot appeal to men's interest as bearing on the only life they know or care about. In the abstract, the natural and the supernatural are even more distinct than the rational and animal elements in man; but historically and in the concrete one might as

well try to work out what the history of Europe would have been apart from Christianity, as try to define or imagine the state of mere nature apart from the supernatural order. The dominant note of that Thomistic and Augustinian theology to which the reigning Pontiff has recalled us, is the immanence of the supernatural in the natural—the inextricable permeation of the latter by the former. This means that as things are in fact, it is as chimerical to explain man apart from Christ, as to explain modern history apart from Christianity; it means that the Christian religion belongs to the integrity of human knowledge as part of the same organic whole; that it bears upon it as much as mathematics does on physical science. The merely "natural" man is one who *ex hypothesi* is complete and explicable without Christ; but then what do we know about him, save as a theological plaything? Whether as fallen, or as redeemed, the only man we know of experimentally is related to the order of grace and cannot be understood apart from Christ; his mind is a tangle and his work a

vanity until they are set free and directed by the Truth and the Life. If in the theoretical "man-as-he-might-have-been" there is no strict exigency of the supernatural; in the historical "man-as-he-is" there are inborn seeds of a longing after Him who is the desire of the nations. And on this fact of our faith we can more firmly rest our argument from the adaptability of Christianity to man's spiritual needs, than on the merely abstract and unhistorical conception of humanity in its bare essence. Hence Christ's word: "The truth shall make you free;" for His doctrine is not an abrupt and unsolicited assertion, but an answer to the questionings of fallen man seeking redemption: "To whom shall we go? Who has the words of Eternal Life?" Only so far as it finds error in possession can the Truth of Christ be said to coerce the mind or seemingly to violate its liberty; its proper ultimate function is to set free and expand; it raises no barriers to its progress save those that are raised already by the laws of sound reason.

This more than harmony of nature and

grace, this identification in the concrete of two orders abstractly separable and opposite, is a point of much value in apologetic. That Christ, His Truth and His Grace, transcend all possible needs and exigencies of humanity is true; but it is none the less true that in the actual order of things we experience needs which point to Him and to Him alone as their satisfaction; and so far as by setting forth in detail this need on our side, and this response on the other, we allow their perfect correspondence to stand out in ever clearer evidence, we shall pursue a method of persuasion that is more effectual in the measure that it is more concrete, inductive, and congenial to prevalent modes of thought.

But thus to establish the relation of organic unity subsisting between the truth of Christ and all other truth; to abolish that wall of partition which would divide the human mind into two several spheres of independent movement, the one simply natural, the other simply supernatural; to show that, as man is, historically, Christianity is the only "natural"

philosophy of life in the sense in which Augustine and Aquinas use the word "natural" —all this requires a mediatorial two-sidedness most difficult to realize; a delicate understanding of the modes of thought and speech on either side; a rare skill of translation from one language to the other; and, not merely an understanding of another's position but, a sympathy with the elements of truth in virtue of which it is maintained.

But besides the intrinsic difficulty of such a method, this same quiet and reverential handling of the modern mind will seem sheer disloyalty to Catholic truth in the eyes of the sledge-hammer controversialist whose gifts are usefully employed on the popular platform or in *Tracts for the Million.* What we need is a toleration of each method in its proper sphere. In Catholic countries it is roughly accurate to class all non-Catholics together as "enemies of the Church;" for there, no man who is in sympathy with religion, however he be harassed with doubt or lost to faith, will abandon the outward profession of Catholicism,

there being no other religious communion, socially or intellectually respectable, in which he may enjoy more liberty of opinion. To leave the Church is the act of those only who are against her; and not of those who are merely quiescent or indifferent. But here, it is otherwise, and only a small minority of those outside the Church can be called its "enemies" in any proper sense. Their dislike, when it exists, is usually due to misunderstanding, and is nearly always moral or even Christian in its basis—resting on some principle of the Gospel or of the moral law which they suppose to be violated by our religion. To deal with such, as with "enemies" of the Church, is a violation of policy, no less than of charity and good taste.

So far as the following essays have any unity it is as constituting a most imperfect effort to give effect to the principles here advocated. They are, as every patient and intelligent reader will see, entirely conservative in their aim and spirit; for "liberal" and "conservative" are terms that have reference to

the end by which, as the scholastics say, a movement is specified or characterized. The merchant who throws his goods overboard to save his vessel and his life is certainly a conservative; he does not part with them willingly, but because go they must. Similarly, he who honestly and firmly makes every concession needed for the preservation of essentials, is most iniquitously classed with those, if such indeed there be, whose very aim is destruction; whose desire is to believe, not as much as is truthfully possible, but, as little.

In conclusion, the writer wishes it to be understood that this selection of articles published up to date is to be taken as a repudiation, for one reason or another, of those not selected—whether it be for faults in style or for inaccuracies or obscurities in statement.

G. T.

March 17, 1901

NOTE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

In deference to some apparently independent criticisms, I have, in this second edition, modified a sentence on p. 152 of the Second Series, which has been taken in a sense perfectly different from that of the writer, and opposed, not merely as these critics somewhat obviously point out, to the text on the title-page; but, as a more comprehensive criticism would have seen, to the motive and spirit of the whole undertaking.

G. T.

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NOTE.—All these essays have appeared as articles in *The Month;* except those on *The Use of Scholasticism* and on *The True and the False Mysticism*, of which the former appeared, as *The Church and Scholasticism*, in the *American Catholic Quarterly*, the latter in the *American Ecclesiastical Record*. Both are here reprinted by kind permission of the editors, and have been slightly modified.

I.

A MORE EXCELLENT WAY.

ACCORDING to the oft-quoted apocryphal prophecies of St. Malachy, *Lumen Cœli* is to be succeeded on the throne of Peter by *Ignis Ardens*. Perhaps the latter forecast may at first sight suggest a Boanerges invoking fire from heaven on the Church's enemies, fulminating anathemas and excommunications. Yet, if the development of the spirit which has been fostered by Leo XIII. is to continue uninterrupted, we may rather augur that the fire to come upon earth is that which Christ came to kindle, the fire of an all-embracing charity, whose flames, according to a quaint exegesis, are as sharp arrows in the hearts of the King's enemies.[1] It certainly cannot be denied that, at least in English-speaking countries, Catholics are waking to a consciousness of the need of other weapons and methods of warfare than those which were suited to times of oppression and persecution. They cannot but feel that, while they

[1] Psalm xliv. 6.

themselves remain to a great extent unchanged, their environments have altered considerably—that they defend what is not attacked, and attack what is not defended. Under pressure of assault, as Mr. W. Ward implies in the *Nineteenth Century* for November, 1895, the Church's attitude since the Reformation has been somewhat that of a hedgehog, which rolls itself into a ball and presents to outsiders an uncomfortable surface of spikes. This attitude, moreover, is prudently preserved for some time after the danger has seemingly passed away, and till it is perfectly safe to unroll, expand, and move about once more. Hibernation is not death, though it is a period of comparatively low vitality; and similarly, during the time referred to, the Church's concern has been to a large extent rather to live than to grow.

When we say that Catholics are beginning to notice and adapt themselves to a change of surroundings, we do not mean that there is an end to the conflict which must always and everywhere be the Church's lot; but that the character of the conflict has changed, and that her present enemies must be approached with different temper and tactics.

And, in fine, what is this change? It is the fall of anything that can properly be called Protestantism, as a dogmatic religious system opposed to

Catholicism. The leaven has leavened the whole mass: the process of disintegration has, practically speaking, worked itself out, and left not one stone of that system standing on another; nothing but isolated units and fragments of units. Catholics stand out among other Christians as alone having a definite position, knowing exactly what they mean and what they want: while others grope in the dark. And further, while Protestantism has been vanishing into indefiniteness, the Church has been deepening her lines of demarcation, and, by opposition, becoming more and more definite. In both camps the conflict has been the occasion of the development of the idea or principle in dispute: in the one case, the principle of authority; in the other, that of freedom. Prior to such development it was not perhaps so clear to either side that there might not be a *via media*, a compromise between a teaching Church and self-teaching. Such medial positions one after another have been tried and have given way, and have thereby demonstrated the necessity of a living, infallible guide, if unity of faith is to be preserved among Christians. Hence it is essential to the Protestant position to deny the necessity of oneness in faith, and to regard Christianity as addressed rather to man's ethical than to his intellectual requirements; whereas

Catholicism provides a revealed First Philosophy or theory of the universe, and makes man's highest perfection depend on a knowledge of Truth, to which his ethical perfection is in some sort consequent. It is clear that the Catholic-Protestant controversy has not been directly about particular points of faith, but about the rule of faith, and the nature and function of the Church. All other controversies about the Eucharist, saint-worship, indulgences, and the like, have been merely accidental to the great point at issue. If, then, this one point has been cleared up, and well defined in consequence, it has been to some extent at the expense of the development of the faith in other particulars. No doubt this was true of all the great controversies in the past; nor can it be expected that every member and article of the body of faith should grow and unfold *pari passu*. This would be pushing the metaphor of growth too far. Still a controversy touching the rule of faith is in a certain way extrinsic, and bears far less directly on other points of belief than a dispute touching some particular matter of faith. To study any one period of English history profoundly is a direct aid to a general, comprehensive view of the whole; whereas a contest as to the veracity of a given historian bears very indirectly on one's historical knowledge.

In fact, for the time being, the student is not advancing, but only wondering how he is to advance. So, simply speaking, the Catholic-Protestant controversy brought the normal process of doctrinal development to a standstill. This, of course, is true only in the rough. For, besides the main question of authority, there have been side issues already referred to: whence has resulted a certain fortification of particular doctrines against Protestant negations. Yet the growth of a doctrine which results from its defence against attacks from without, is as unsymmetrical, as irregular, as spasmodic as is the course of error. We find, for example, the Eucharistic doctrine, with its huge wealth of meaning, its promises of light, its complicated connections with the body of revealed truth, to a great extent unexplored, a mine of treasures hardly touched; while the single and purely philosophical point of "transubstantiation" has filled folios. Again, the Protestant controversy was, as long as it lasted, internal to Christianity. The Church's intellectual energies were expended against those who allowed the inspired writings as a common basis of argument; and so far they were withdrawn from the needs of that wider non-Christian world which has to be met on the common ground of reason. The great work of harmonizing the whole body of

Christian doctrine with reason, of showing Catholicism in its entirety as the Heaven-sent answer to the problem of human life, as the complement of man's nature, individual and social—had to remain to a certain extent in abeyance. It is not on the whole very wonderful if the habits of three centuries are not shaken off in three days, especially when we are dealing with a society of the dimensions of the Catholic Church, where traditional methods, as such, are held in veneration and reluctantly changed; nor need it surprise us to find here and there Catholic controversialists in full armour sawing the air with their heavy broadswords, disproving justification by faith alone, and the all-sufficiency of Scripture as a guide to truth.

In the main, however, it is well recognized now that the Church must return once more to her old task of evangelizing the Gentiles, that is, those who are altogether outside the pale of Christianity. With the Vatican Council the Protestant controversy was brought to a close, as far as the Church was concerned. There she spoke her last word on the subject, and turned aside to resume her proper work, her function as "light of the world." Were one to judge her methods solely in the light of the Protestant controversy, one might easily infer that her office in regard to the Truth was simply

aggressive and defensive—bellicose in every sense. Nothing could be more unlike the conduct of her Divine Master, whose work she continues. He came to state, to proclaim, to reveal; not to argue, controvert, or defend: and such is her mode of procedure so far as the world at large is concerned. She reveals herself in her intellectual and ethical beauty, as God's good gift to man. She invites men to come to her; but does not desire to force herself on their acceptance. It is only when she is herself attacked, or her children are attacked, that she is controversial or aggressive or defensive. Hence it is a matter of common observation that gentleness usually characterizes her dealing with the pagan or infidel, while the formal heretic or apostate excites her bitter indignation.

In English-speaking countries her environment is to a growing extent that of a cultured paganism, and to such an environment she must now adapt her conduct. She must learn to "speak to the heart of this people," and to do this she must study its language and its heart; she must have faith in its radical good-sense and good-will, however overlaid and obscured to superficial consideration. If English non-Catholics misunderstand and parody the religion of Catholics, even when most desirous to do them justice; it may well be, and must be, that Catholics

fail largely to understand the workings of non-Catholic minds and the impulses of non-Catholic hearts. Social and educational isolation has to a large extent created an estrangement in language and modes of thought which renders exchange of ideas difficult at the best, and impossible when the discussion is governed by the controversial spirit.

Much as one might desire a possible return of the Church of England, or of any considerable section of it, to Catholic unity, our ultimate hopes and prayers are more ambitious, namely, for a return of the English-speaking people or the English-speaking races. It would be a great mistake to identify these two causes, although the latter and greater includes the former. Were our only concern with Anglicanism, the old controversial method might still be in place for many a day, though even there sacerdotal Anglicanism is an idea that can be left largely to develop itself into its only logical issue. It would certainly be a pity were the Church in these countries to address herself so exclusively to the Anglican question as to withdraw her intellectual energies from the wider and more pressing spiritual needs of the people at large.

For this work the controversial and polemical method is altogether unsuited. What is needed before all things is a clear manifestation of the

Catholic religion in its ethical and intellectual beauty; not as *a* religion, but as eminently *the* religion of mankind; as the complement of human nature, the "desire of the nations;" as the one God-given answer to the problem of life and the social problem. For this we need interpreters or go-betweens: men, that is, who know and sympathize with both sides, who have at once a comprehensive grasp of the "idea" of Catholicism and are possessed with its spirit, and who are no less in touch with the spirit of their own country and age, its strength and its weakness; who can understand and speak both languages, and, recognizing unity of thought under diversity of expression, can translate from one into the other, interpreting the age to the Church and the Church to the age.

This is a very obvious requirement to suggest, but a very difficult one to satisfy: for this two-sidedness is rare, or, at least, rarely well-balanced. However, the clear recognition of the requirement is the first step towards its fulfilment; and that it is receiving increased recognition is evident to all observers.

Amongst the ideas which must be put forward prominently in order to present Catholicism in its true light before the eyes of the world, one of the most important is that of the end for which the Church

exists. It will take a long time to undo the prejudices begotten by three centuries of misrepresentation, and to convince men that the Church, like her Founder, comes not to be ministered to, but to minister. The Church is for man, and not man for the Church.

Protestantism has fixed in men's minds the idea that the Roman Church is a huge speculation run in the interests of the Bishop of Rome; that there is some scarcely definable temporal gain which is quite sufficient to maintain the fraud in existence century after century, and to enlist in the cause the sacrifices and best energies of thousands of devoted men and women, who are in no way sharers in the plunder. It must, then, be made clear that the Church rules as a parent in the interests of her children, not as a despot who rules in his own interest: that the maintenance of her power and authority are not ends in themselves, but means to a further end, namely, to the ultimate perfection of human nature, individual and social. Eternal life, here inchoatively, hereafter perfectly—this is her end. And "this is life eternal, that they should know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." In other words, she aims at the highest possible intellectual and ethical perfection of the soul, which of course culminates in the knowledge and love of the infinite

Truth and Goodness. And here again we have to guard against current misapprehensions. The pseudo-Christianity of Calvin is based on a belief in the irredeemable badness of human nature, and accordingly divorces the natural and supernatural orders altogether. It can do nothing for nature except to fly from it and leave it to its rottenness. It professes to be wholly unconcerned with the present world and its history and progress: mental and moral culture in the natural order is labour wasted on faculties which are intrinsically corrupted by sin, and as such, is in no way subservient to grace or the interests of the next life. Such a parody of Christianity gives a justification to the charge made by the worldling against the righteous: *Quoniam inutilis est nobis*—"He is of no use whatever to us." The divorce of religion from secular life, this sundering by man of what God has joined together, is the necessary result of the Calvinist conception. And as among English-speaking races no other conception of Christianity is more widely accepted, it will be no easy matter to bring home to men the ancient and Catholic view of the matter.

The Church holds firmly to the fundamental and essential goodness of human nature which underlies the foulest corruption, the deepest degradation; which is related to grace, as reason is to faith. Both

are from the same God; both conspire to one harmonious result. The natural and the supernatural are not sundered, nor are they violently yoked together; but the lower ministers to the higher, and the higher perfects, crowns, and elevates the lower. Such is the Catholic conception of the Incarnation—God brought down to earth, and earth lifted up to God. Christianity is not, cannot be, indifferent to the full perfection of man's natural faculties. Culture and civilization is not sanctification; and a certain height of sanctity is compatible with low culture. But far from any opposition between the two, both are requisite for the full development of man's capabilities; each in due proportion safeguards the other.

And as the man without religion is as much a monstrosity as the man without the use of reason, so an irreligious state or irreligious education is as violently opposed to the Catholic conception as it is accordant to the Calvinist conception of Christianity.

That the Church exists, not for her own sake, but for the perfection of human nature, present no less than future, natural no less than supernatural, social no less than individual—this is one of the ideas which it will take time and patient skill to bring home clearly to minds biassed by a false presentment of Christianity, and unsuspicious of any other.

Another of these ideas is the true conception of ecclesiastical authority in matters of faith and discipline. As misconceived by the great bulk of intelligent non-Catholics, nothing could be more repugnant to the genius of a race which has a passionate love of just liberty and freedom, however ill it may be able to define it. To sacrifice one's freedom of judgment or one's freedom of action is, in English ears, almost equivalent to sacrificing one's manhood, and this for the simple reason that freedom in this connection means *rightful* freedom, which no man may sacrifice with a good conscience. Plainly where there is no freedom, none can be sacrificed. As a man does not sacrifice his freedom of thought in yielding to evidence, so neither in yielding to God's word. It is not intellectual slavery to bow to the truth—"the truth shall make you free"—but to be entangled in error. It is not moral slavery to obey conscience, but to violate it. Given the Church's Divine authority in faith and morals, there can be nothing servile in submission. Yet the chief misconception concerns the manner in which that authority is exercised. The general impression left by the Catholic-Protestant controversy is of two opposing systems, in one of which private judgment and self-guidance prevail absolutely and in every thing: in the other authority and discipline no less

universally. Both conceptions are caricatures, resulting from the intense emphasis given to the chief point at issue. For the outsider, Romanism is authority and nothing else but authority; authority created for its own sake, as an end in itself, whose sole function is to cramp the intellect and to enslave the soul—a cross, if you like, invented for the torture and death of man's natural reason and will. The devout Romanist is popularly pourtrayed as being in a state of mental paralysis, hemmed in on all sides with dogmatic definitions, prohibitions, and restraints. His reason and will are atrophied from mere disuse, and their place is usurped by authority to which he turns for the solution of every doubt, speculative or practical. This preposterous delusion must be dispelled by a continual insistance on the truth, that both in theory and in fact authority in every society, ecclesiastical or civil, is but a means to securing the end of the society in question. It implies primarily a directive power; and only secondarily, in case of default, a coercive power. It is only as coercive that authority is odious at all; and only when unjustly coercive is it justly odious and inimical to true liberty. As directive, it is purely helpful and beneficial. In a well-ordered society, where the rule is just and the subjects are just, the coercive restraint is never felt, and liberty is perfect.

The law (as coercive) is not for the just, but for transgressors. But if the rein and bit is continually felt, it argues either a bad rider or a bad horse.

As has been observed, the Protestant controversy has occasioned the mistake of regarding authority as the very essence of Catholicism; and indeed it is the essential difference between it and Protestantism as such. But Protestantism is not the only or adequate antithesis to the Catholic religion. In fact, it is not opposed directly to the faith itself so much as to the preamble and rule of faith. It is only in its aspect as anti-Protestantism that authority could be regarded as the essence of Catholicism. It will be necessary therefore to bring out clearly the truth that, theoretically, coercive authority holds an entirely subsidiary and secondary place in the Catholic religion; and that the desire and practice of the Church is by all means to minimize the occasions for its use; and finally, that normally it is no more hurtful to spiritual liberty than civil authority is to civil liberty.

Another point of misunderstanding which hides the true face of the Church from intelligent outsiders, concerns her Catholicity and independence of national or racial limitations. It is from this that she derives her name of Catholic, *i.e.*, the Church of humanity, as opposed to the Church of

the Jews. As the grace of Christian sanctity is received differently into different souls, and modified by the natural character so as to encounter certain resistances and certain yieldings, and to issue in all cases in some peculiar and imperfect reproduction of the Christian type; so the Catholic religion is received variously by various races and ages, but perfectly by none. Points of doctrine or discipline which have a special attraction for one national type, are just those which encounter resistance in other quarters. For example, an independent self-governing race will be morbidly suspicious lest authority should degenerate into tyranny, and will be too ready to scent oppression everywhere. To a rationalistic and unimaginative people the mysticism of Christianity will present special difficulty. Races of an opposite character will find no difficulty in these matters, and may by their own supine passivity and formalism discredit their religion. They will be ready not only to defend, but to exaggerate and distort those tenets and principles which are in accord with their natural character; and identifying themselves with the Catholic cause, will add new barriers against the return of other nations to the faith. It is not surprising, then, that heresies are so often racial. As circumstances give special prominence to this

or that aspect of Catholicism, it will probably come into conflict with the peculiar tastes or susceptibilities of one nationality or another. The Reformation controversy alienated the Teutons and left the Latins. Some future problem may reverse the story. It would be narrow to conclude that Catholicism is peculiarly congenial to the Latin races or to the Celts, and uncongenial to the Teutons. We may say that authority offers a greater difficulty to the latter race. But authority is not the whole of Catholicism, and in other matters the reverse may be true.

There is no more fruitful source of misrepresentation than the attribution to Catholicism of effects and phenomena which are racial. Such delusions can be dispelled only by solid historical induction on a sufficiently wide basis. It is not unnatural that as Catholicism has for three centuries been largely associated with races who have many un-English characteristics in common, these characteristics should be set down to their religion without stopping to consider whether there be anything else in common to ascribe them to. Hence an inference that Catholicism is essentially un-English or even Italian. The remedy is to be found in extending one's view beyond the limits of the last three centuries and of the Latin races.

A similar difficulty in the past was the attempt to identify the essential interests of Catholicism with the cause of monarchy or feudalism; but as it does not belong to the present we need not discuss it, but pass it by with a glance.

But above all it is important that the Catholic faith should be interpreted and brought home to the intellect of our times. As a whole, as an articulated body of truth, it is as little known to men of education as the British Constitution is to a New Zealander. They have heard of this or the other monstrous doctrine—monstrous enough perhaps when viewed out of its proper connections—they are acquainted with odd passages of its history, but the "idea," even in its least developed form, they have never laid hold of. True, the authority-question is the first thing to face; and the Catholic controversialist naturally insists on this and post-pones all other explanations and discussions for afterwards. It is the most logical method, but is it the most practical? Do not the dispositions with which one approaches the authority-question depend largely on what that authority wants to impose upon one? And is it not often the intrinsic beauty, completeness and soul-stayingness of that body of doctrine which clusters round the Incarnation, that first draws the restless intellect towards the Church,

and lays ever firmer hold upon it, as light after light flashes upon it, revealing subtle and unsuspected links, pointing to a unity in variety beyond man's devising, and so stamping the whole conception with the seal of divinity as to supersede all apologetics and appeals to miracle and prophecy? To present such a conception of the faith to the modern world is only possible for those who possess it themselves, and can translate it into the language and imagery of their hearers. To some extent, no doubt, in the case of certain individual theologians, the exigencies of these three centuries of Protestant controversy, diverting theology from its normal course and giving it a polemical character, have interfered with the noble work of perfecting the synthesis of faith and reason, begun by certain of the Fathers and furthered by the scholastics. As has been already observed, Catholicism repudiates the divorce between nature and grace, reason and faith; and as soon as the Church had established her title as light of the world and teacher of nations, she at once proceeded to her task of marshalling all truth, natural and revealed, into one harmonious whole. It was in the hands of the schoolmen, and notably of Aquinas, that this work advanced most rapidly. No discovery of physical science such as it then was, no fact of history, no speculation of the

human intellect, whether of Greek, Jew, or Arabian, was despised or neglected. All were carefully considered in their bearings on the whole body of known truth natural and revealed; each was fitted into its proper place in the mosaic, leaving us in the *Summa* of Aquinas a monument of that comprehensive sympathy which hails every truth from whatever source as the gift of God. It is to this labour and method that His Holiness bids us devote ourselves, rather than perpetuate in an uncongenial age the controversies which appealed to the taste of what may be called the polemical centuries. We have to take up that unfinished work and carry it out on the same plan up to the present day; and this, in the broad sympathetic calm spirit of Aquinas, so different from that of controversial theology. For without the sympathy of comprehension we may silence or exasperate an adversary, but we can never solve a difficulty or banish a doubt. Here then is a task that lies before the theologians and thinkers in this age and country; and it is those who, in obedience to His Holiness, imbue themselves with the spirit and method of Aquinas, that will be found equal to it.

In fine, all our efforts must be directed to the clearing away of every mist which hides the true aspect of the Church from outsiders. Let her shine

forth truly as she is, and she will be her own proof, carrying conviction to all men of good-will, constraining them to confess: "Surely God is in this place, and I knew it not. This is none other than the house of God, this is the gate of Heaven." In proportion as conscience is obeyed and refined, it will be ready to recognize in Catholicity, rightly understood, its divinely established complement, its long-sought guide and support.

As the Church becomes better known men will see in her the true answer to the present problem concerning the necessity of a revealed religion for the preservation of society, and for other social problems as well. She will stand out, not as one of many versions of Christianity, but as the one great human-hearted Church of humanity, who is "the mother of us all."

Feb. 1895

II.

WISEMAN: HIS AIMS AND METHODS.

Some of the critics, and notably the *Times*, have found fault with the structure and bulk of Mr. Ward's *Life of Cardinal Wiseman*, and are therefore inclined to regard the work as in some way detracting from his so far well-deserved repute as a biographer. For ourselves, we are inclined, upon reflection and closer examination, to regard this criticism as rather short-sighted. As to the charge of bulkiness, we do not say that here and there the illustration of particular points by correspondence, reminiscence, and anecdote, may not have been needlessly elaborate, and that possibly a hundred pages might have been saved with improvement; but that any one chapter, and least of all that which to some has seemed the most dispensable, namely, the Epilogue, could have been omitted consistently with the author's scope we are inclined to deny. For it must not be assumed that the whole end in view was to write an ideal biography

of equal interest to all classes and sections of the community. The Life of Wiseman is the life of the first Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, of one under whose auspices it may be said that the candle hidden for three centuries behind the altar was brought out into public recognition once more and replaced in its candlestick.

Wiseman, whatever his claim to be a man of letters, was before all else a churchman, one who had dedicated himself consciously and deliberately to the revival of Roman Catholicism in England. It is as the advocate of certain methods and objects, as the upholder of certain principles, that he interests Mr. Ward, who is a philosopher and a churchman first, and a biographer afterwards. In saying this, we do not lose sight of the high biographical merit of his two volumes on Dr. William G. Ward; but there again he was dealing with one who was pre-eminently a thinker, and considering him precisely in relation to two movements of thought of which he was a *magna pars* — the Oxford Movement and the Catholic Revival.

To understand Wiseman and his methods, after learning something of his personal character, his early and his later education, it was most needful to appreciate the matter he had to deal with, no

less than the form to which he hoped to some extent to begin to reduce it. It was essential to understand the different classifications of the community in relation to the Catholic religion, together with the antecedents and tendencies of each class—the "Old Catholics" as they are curiously called, and the converts; the Established Church with its upward and downward movement —and also to understand those events which were in some sort critical in the religious history of the period, such as the Tractarian crisis of 1845; the Restoration of the Hierarchy; the Austrian Concordat; and the Roman Question of 1860. It was finally by no means out of place, that having exhibited the working of Wiseman's methods in the concrete, Mr. Ward should, in his Epilogue, consider them apart in their general form, and explain and defend them.

No doubt had the task fallen into other and perhaps less sympathetic hands, the work might have taken a different and more popular shape; but it may be questioned whether, even as a biography, it would not have failed in not giving the first place to the really leading feature of Wiseman's life and character.

For ourselves, our interest chiefly centres in the Epilogue, which deals so ably with some of

the points we have endeavoured to emphasize elsewhere in these pages.[1]

Differing as they did in temperament and mental calibre, it is remarkable how closely both Newman and Wiseman were agreed as to the main line to be followed in pushing the cause of Catholicism, namely, by a vigorous insistence on the exclusive character of that religion, together with an equal, perhaps greater, insistence on the all-embracing width of its sympathies with every human interest; and, indeed, each of them in his own way was a living embodiment of the two principles so earnestly advocated. Exclusiveness they could not but feel was altogether distasteful to the indiscriminating temper of the time and country, and so far an obstacle to the acceptance of the faith of Rome; even though it was in some measure due to the spread of Latitudinarian notions that the Church in England was enabled to show herself in the light of day, after being buried in the catacombs.

It was therefore a matter of primary moment to vindicate the principle of an exclusive or dogmatic religion; to show that it was really inseparable from the notion of faith in a strict sense, and of a Divine revelation, that it was a

[1] Cf. "A More Excellent Way" and "Prospects of Reunion."

characteristic not only of the post-Tridentine Church of Rome, but of the Christian Church from the very earliest days—nay, perhaps never more conspicuously than in the very earliest. If Christianity was to be in some sort the religion of the millions, and not a mere philosophy for the cultured few, it could be so only in as far as it relied upon faith for its hold on the multitude, and not upon analytical reasoning, whereof the millions are incapable. For, the capacity of reason as an all-sufficient guide in matters of morality and religion has been tried in balance of history and found wanting.

Although the duty of obeying God in the matter of our intellectual assents, no less than in any other matter within our control, must be apparent to reason before the act of faith is possible, yet the assent itself from a motive of obedience may be called truly, not indeed an irrational, but a non-rational assent, as opposed to those assents to which reason, or even the canons of credibility, force the mind. It is not, however, only in the matter of Divine faith, but in a thousand other matters, religious and secular, that our assents are in a way non-rational. Yet in another way they are most reasonable; and to reject all that have not been subjected to the test of analytical

reason, or that seem to fail under it, would be the very height of unreason. For, not to speak of that host of assents which are given us by what Newman calls the "illative sense," and which are strictly, though inexpressibly, reasonable, the main bulk of what most men believe is derived from tradition, imitation, blind repetition, and other non-rational sources, which are nevertheless reliable on the whole; and if a certain percentage of error and superstition is thus inevitably imbibed, yet he who would on this account reject all, would be as one who prefers to die of thirst rather than drink anything but the best champagne.

It is thus that Nature has provided for the feeding and formation of our minds in most ordinary matters. Tradition is not the only, nor the ultimate, medium, but it is the commonest and most extensively useful. It warrants a good, solid presumption in favour of most that it vouches for; and it has a direct and unimpeachable value as testifying to what is commonly said or believed. Common belief, though an imperfect mirror, is nevertheless a mirror of objective reality, whose error we can determine and allow for. To apply analytical reason to all such data is to risk rooting up the wheat with the tares. "A secouer trop vivement l'arbre," says a recent writer, "pour faire

tomber les feuilles mortes, on risque aussi de sacrifier plus d'un rameau encore vert." The more we look into the matter, the more we are forced to acknowledge not only the existence, not only the expedience, but also the reasonableness and legitimacy of numberless beliefs which have been imposed on our judgment from without, and in no wise drawn from premises or from direct experience.

This is the solid core of truth which Traditionalism has perverted by its extravagant endeavour to exclude every other and higher criterion. Up to this point the Christian religion is traditionalist, not only in demanding the unconditional obedience of faith as to her revealed dogmas, but also in requiring a certain reasonable trust in her uninspired public beliefs and traditions taken *in globo*, without exacting an assent to any given detail or denying the possibility of particular error. Thus, for example, she gives us the legend of a saint in her public office, not as gospel truth, but as showing the picture, more or less subjective, which he created upon the mind of his own generation; as being indeed substantially true, but precisely how far, she does not go out of her way to determine. Hagiography is not the Church's direct mission, though she may use its results as she uses those

of current history or science—for what they may be worth.

Besides this humbler but more practical and universal source of knowledge, the Church has, however, always acknowledged the supreme claims of analytical reason as a negative test, while steadily denying its supposed right to be a positive guide to truth, and its pretence to be able to give full and adequate expression to inferences undoubtedly valid, yet too complex for statement. Indeed, it is not so much the insufficiency of reason she distrusts, as the insufficiency of expression; for the fallacy of rationalism lies, not merely in denying all worth to faith, inspiration, tradition, and other non-rational sources of knowledge, human and Divine, but also in confounding reason with logic—as one might confound speech with grammar. Above all, she is profoundly convinced of the feebleness and unsteadiness of the grasp of reason on those fundamental religious truths touching the ultimate end and use of life, on which we have to take our stand in those very crises when reason is most obscured and biassed by passion and temptation. Even calm reason itself suggests that we are bound to hold fast to these truths by an act of will—to refuse to discuss them in the time of clouds and darkness; in other

words, we are bound to a sort of natural faith of which Divine faith is but an elevation and extension. It is only by the sovereign will-firmness of Divine faith that religious truth can be made an effectual governing principle in the individual or in society, so as to stand fast against the downward drag of human weakness, mental and moral.

If, therefore, the Church has not only permitted, but encouraged the use of analytical reason in the orderly presentment of her dogma, and for the continual sifting and refining of the great mass of her popular traditions; yet she is steadfastly opposed to its exclusive, or even excessive use. She knows too well that Protestantism and its offspring, religious indifferentism, are both the fruit of an extreme and narrow scholasticism, unwilling to recognize the due claims of authority and tradition, impatient of twilight and suspense; impetuous with the childish self-confidence of inexperience. For if the necessary laws of logic are the only road to truth, then, indeed, no man is responsible for his opinions and beliefs, religious or otherwise, and they are a matter of pure indifference; and again, if nothing is to be affirmed but what is forced upon us by those laws, then even the first principles of reason and morality, private and public. are imperilled.

It was his clear comprehension of this truth that convinced Wiseman that Rome alone had preserved the principles necessary for the healing of the nations. It was no anti-Anglican or sectarian animus, that inspired him to do battle for the Catholicizing of his country, but a profound insight into the essentially and inevitably Protestant character of the established religion, and its consequent inability to deal with the religious needs of the age. Much as he sympathized with those of its members who sought to prove its claim to be a dogmatic Church, teaching with Divine authority, he believed that such a claim was absolutely unfounded and insupportable, and that whatever deference its voice might win from its children at large, it could never be the deference of faith, but at most that which is due to any *corpus doctum* of cultivated men in their own subject—a deference weakened, and almost nullified, by the existence of so many competing bodies, as well as by their own lamentable but necessary internal disagreements. In a word, the very notions of ecclesiastical faith and authority are excluded by the latitudinarianism which gave birth to and holds together the Church of England; and the latent antagonism has in our days made itself fully apparent. "Anglo-Catholicism" is a palliation at most. a remedy it cannot be. A past Council, or

a primitive Church, is eventually as feeble a substitute for a living teacher as is the Bible. For all alike, a living and authoritative interpretation is needed.

Seeing in the Catholic Church the true and only remedy, and feeling at the same time how distasteful the notion of a dogmatic and exclusive religion must be to a public fed for three centuries on the fallacies of individualism, and to whom the merely negative broadness of Anglicanism seemed to savour of a deeper insight and more sympathetic charity, Wiseman desired in every way to mitigate and soften this apparently harsher and more forbidding aspect of the Church of Rome. The chapter on the "English Papists" may serve to give us some faint idea of the extent of that ingrained fanaticism and profound stupidity of the Protestant populace, with which he had to contend, not only in this, but in almost every other point connected with the just conception of the Catholic religion. Indeed, nothing could better illustrate what we have been insisting on above, as to the small part played by deliberate reasoning in the formation of the general mind, than the fanatical attitude of public opinion in this country towards Catholicism, in defiance of every claim of justice and charity; and in default not merely of rational evidence for its support, but even

of moderate probability. A vague, blinding sentiment of deep-seated antagonism and hostility, seems to have paralyzed every better judgment and feeling of a nation commonly credited beyond their neighbours with a certain temperateness and fairness.

The first essential was to try to convince such a people that Catholics were at least human, that they were not secret emissaries of the powers of darkness, hostile to every rational and social interest, conspiring to strangle the intellect with the chains and fetters of a gratuitously complicated dogmatic system—a *gens lucifuga* in the intellectual sense, fearful of science and history, and of every new light which might conflict with the superstitions to which they were enslaved. Wiseman, with his genial, intelligent interest in everything human, did not hesitate to come before the public on every occasion as a speaker and lecturer in history, science, art, and philological research; as one interested not only in matters ecclesiastical, but in every other department of life. He knew the difference between an unanswerable difficulty and a doubt, and that faith worth the name could never even wish to shrink from the light, but could wait patiently, nay, wait for ever, for the reconciliation of differences which it knew to be but apparent; that the faith which blenched was convicted of being tinged by

some secret rationalism. He knew that if in certain crises the Church had to draw into herself, and separate herself in a spirit of protest from the culture of the day, yet such a divorce was abnormal and hurtful to both parties, and therefore was to be terminated as speedily as possible. He felt that until Catholics entered into the intellectual life of their country, and spoke the language of its schools, they could have no strong influence over it for good; that it was on the neutral ground of secular learning and common national interests, that the hostile parties must first meet and get to understand one another. For this reason especially it was that he welcomed the little body of Oxford converts as a sort of interpreter between the two camps, so long estranged as to have forgotten one another's language in matters religious; he hoped that the neophytes would both give and receive; leaven and be leavened. And this hope surely implied no lack of reverence for that lingering remnant of the ancient Catholic Church, those who had indeed borne the burden and heat of the day, and to whom we owe the fact that our continuity with the pre-Reformation Church is not merely through derivation from a common root, but through a stubborn survival of a vein of life in the old stock, charred and riven by a thousand thunderbolts of persecution, dead to all seeming,

yet not watered for nothing with the blood of so many martyrs. Indeed, the chapter on "Converts and Old Catholics," shows us plainly how invaluable a check was exercised by the influence of the disciples of Challoner upon the Italianizing enthusiasm of some ardent neophytes, who, had there been no Old Catholics to amalgamate with, no English stock to be grafted into, would have constituted an "Italian Mission," not only in the legitimate sense, but also in a sense very undesirable and disastrous to the popularizing of Catholicism in England. Still, though there were to be found among them men of great ability, high special culture, and learning, it could not but be that those who had been ostracized and cut off from their heritage by three centuries of iniquitous oppression, should exhibit that one-sidedness and lack of general culture which marks men who are either self-taught, or taught at home—that is, within the limits of some isolated clan. "The intellectual activity of a great nation," writes Mr. Ward, "has its natural channels. Nothing but a miracle could prevent any small body from suffering intellectually if it is cut off from communication with those channels. The very best intellectual endowment, when thus isolated will spend itself on efforts which appear to the general public to be sectarian and purely con-

troversial—whose tone and form make the ablest arguments unpersuasive."

Wiseman was anxious that what was the effect of oppression and persecution, *sc.*, the alienation of Catholics from the intellectual life of the country, should not be ascribed to any narrowing influence of the Catholic religion as such, and for this reason he used all his tact and persuasion to overcome the almost natural reluctance to amalgamate which at first separated the neophytes and Old Catholics almost into two factions, to their mutual hurt. In this and in every other way he strove to free the true conception of the Church's dogmatic office and exclusiveness from the cobwebs of misapprehension and misrepresentation with which it was covered and obscured; and to exhibit it as simply the necessary, rational, and Divine safeguard of those religious truths which are at the root of all social and intellectual development. No doubt it needs a certain "wish to believe" before prejudiced minds can be disposed to take the trouble needed to distinguish between what is *per se* and *per accidens;* what is to be ascribed to Catholics as such, and what to their local, national, or individual circumstances and peculiarities; what is due to the use, what to the abuse, of principles and laws. And therefore the first endeavour must be to create this

"wish to believe" by drawing attention to the human and attractive side of Catholicity, its social utility, its universal sympathy with every effort in the cause of truth, justice, and charity; or at least by removing all false impressions to the contrary. Only then will minds be disposed to believe that the Church is always more willing to loose than to bind; and that she binds only so far as she is absolutely urged by necessity; that definitions are simply forced from her by the cavillings of the rationalistic or heretical mind; that though final, so far as they exclude some definite error, her dogmas are never final in the sense of stating exhaustively truths that, being supernatural, are inexhaustible; that if she arrests the inopportune discussion or proclamation of some new discovery in history or science, it is really in the essential interest of truth, lest the wheat should be uprooted with the tares, and the minds of millions perplexed in matters of supreme practical consequence for the sake of a detail of little or no practical consequence; or it is because the truth is urged in an heretical spirit, not as creating an interesting difficulty, but as founding a right to doubt. When once we recognize that there is in all men, so far as unregenerate, a spirit of unauthorized dogmatism essentially heretical, against whose tyranny the authorized dogma of the Church is the

Divine safeguard of liberty, we shall not be surprised to find that many who belong to the Church are prone at times, all unconsciously, to gratify this dogmatizing instinct by urging orthodox beliefs upon others in an intolerant and narrow spirit, really because they are their own, ostensibly because they are divinely authorized; and even to try to bring their purely private opinions under the ægis of ecclesiastical infallibility, and to impose them upon others under pain of anathema. That a dogmatic religion should lend itself to this abuse is inevitable; but it would be a mistake to ascribe the dogmatizing temper of particular Catholics to the Catholic Church.

These and a thousand others are the misapprehensions Wiseman had to contend with, and which we have still to contend with. His singular insight and foresight gave him a comprehensive grasp of the situation and its prospects that few of his contemporaries could fully share, and which the progress of events has largely justified. If, perhaps, his sanguine hopefulness made him expect a more immediate and abundant inflow from the Establishment than actually took place, yet on the whole his anticipation of the course of events has been verified. There may be no reason to expect a conversion of England in the sense we should all

most desire, but there is every reason to believe that the Catholic Church alone will survive as the representative of dogmatic Christianity in this country. As such there is a great mission before her, even if not a great triumph. She will have to stand alone as the exponent of Christian truth to the non-Christian world. She would therefore prepare herself ill for such an office were she to narrow her present energies to a hostile strife with particular Christian sects or denominations, and not rather to address herself to the sympathetic consideration of the mental and moral needs of that growing multitude to whom the very meaning of life is a problem and faith an idle word.

Feb. 1898

III.

THE PROSPECTS OF REUNION.

BEFORE being able to form even a probable conjecture as to the prospects of a reunion of the Anglican Church with Catholic Christendom, it will be necessary to come to a clear understanding of the Catholic movement within the Establishment, so that knowing what it is, and whence it comes, we may more hopefully prognosticate its future developments. We speak of it advisedly as the "Catholic" movement, since it is in many ways an undoing of the work of the sixteenth century, and a departure from the Protestantism of those who inherit and faithfully follow the principles of the first Reformers. It is, moreover, avowedly a return to the Christianity of the period prior to the schism between East and West, which was certainly Catholic Christianity, however its Catholicity may be misinterpreted.

There are probably as many different versions and analyses of this movement as there are of the French Revolution or of the Renaissance; each

presenting some single phase as if it were a complete all-round view, to the neglect of other aspects equally important, each coloured to a great extent according to the subjective peculiarities of the beholder's vision. All such movements are far too complex for any single mind to take in and master, however keen-sighted and well-informed; and it is only after they have ceased to be of any present practical interest, that the historian can draw his somewhat uncertain verdict from a laborious examination and comparison of the babel of conflicting opinions. From this it by no means follows that contemporary criticisms are worthless, provided due allowance be made for inevitable bias and limitation of view. The whole truth about a man is neither what he thinks about himself nor what his neighbour thinks about him, yet both are worth hearing on the subject; and so we may listen with profit to what Anglicans say about themselves, and also to what their assailants, Protestant and Catholic, say about them, and from all gather materials for a more adequate view.

It is not too much to say, that a movement, like many a man, often fails to understand itself—what it means, and what it would be at—until the idea from which it springs works itself clear. Still less do the individuals who take part in the movement,

and who are under the subtle influence of its leading idea, always grasp its meaning or agree in their explanation of it. Infected with the same epidemic, they diagnose their symptoms with all the inaccuracy and vagueness of amateurs; and no two perhaps being in the same stage of the disease, their accounts of it present little or no agreement. Yet in truth there is a real unity of thought among them, which is felt rather than expressed; and which perhaps is endangered by the effort to give it premature accuracy of expression.

Looking at the Anglican movement from a purely Roman Catholic standpoint, and in the light of present evidence, one very definite question offers itself for our consideration which ought to be met with a no less definite answer, namely: Is this movement the work of God; and if so, is it from God positively or only permissively? A Catholic will naturally regard it as the work of God, if in one way or another it eventually results in the spread and exaltation of the Roman Catholic religion in this country. That it has so far been fruitful in numerous conversions, that it has in many ways strengthened the position and influence of Catholicism in England is too evident to need demonstration. As to its eventual results in this respect, we are left to conjectures more or less probable; but it

is certainly the feeling of most Catholics that, were the Anglican movement now to receive some sudden and absolute check, the prospects of the Catholic Church in England would be very much darker than they are at present. For the great majority of educated persons received every year into the Church have been, so to say, nursed in Anglicanism. There it is that they have received the truth piecemeal, in a way in which we could not in conscience deal it out to them, however expedient it might seem to do so; they have been brought step by step back to that first principle of authority with which the Roman Catholic instructor is almost constrained to begin; from a gradual conviction of the truth of the Church's teaching in detail, they have been disposed to admit her claims as an infallible teacher; they have been habituated insensibly to Catholic practices and devotions; their eyes have grown accustomed to ceremonial, ranging from the simplest variation on the Evangelical type up to a ritual often more elaborate than our own. Altogether, Anglicanism furnishes a convenient gangway along which it is possible to slide up from Evangelical Protestantism into the Church of Rome, thus avoiding the necessity of a violent and almost impossible leap which few would ever venture to contemplate.

The gulf fixed between Catholicism and the

purely Protestant denominations, with which Evangelical Churchmen of the old type may be numbered, is almost too wide even for hostility; and the social and educational isolation in which Catholics have been forced to live, owing to long-continued persecution, has made it very hard for them to understand Protestantism or to speak to it in its own language—which is, after all, the first requisite for persuasion.

Had there been no Tractarian movement, and were there now no "Anglo-Catholic" movement, to bridge over the gulf, it is very difficult to imagine that the Church would ever have made as much headway in this country as she has done. We do not as a rule care to consider a position which is immeasurably different from our own. Few Christians feel drawn to sit down to a candid consideration of the claims of Islam. But a Low Church Protestant will not look on the position of a moderate High Churchman as impossible or not worth considering, though he would not waste a thought on Romanism; and similarly the moderate High Churchman will be ready to look a little higher, though he protests against the "Romanizing" extreme. It is perhaps only this same extreme that comes very directly under the influence of the Catholic Church, for which it has been prepared by

other agencies; and it is only through the mediation and instrumentality of the whole movement that we indirectly come in contact with Protestantism pure and simple. Thus both the Anglican and the Catholic see God's finger in the same movement; but the one regards it as a *via media*, and the other as a bridge, with respect to Rome.

We are not, of course, speaking merely of the Tractarian movement, but also, and perhaps more particularly, of "Anglo-Catholicism," which, although in some sense its offspring, involves other principles which give it a distinct character and spirit. It is not a more unexpected outgrowth from Tractarianism than Tractarianism was from Protestantism. Newman was as bewildered by its lawlessness as a hen when the ducklings she has hatched take to the water.

But here, too, it is hardly possible for the Catholic not to see the working of Providence. Tractarianism was altogether academic, an affair of the Universities. It might bring over a scholar here and there; but it could never really touch the masses nor even the otherwise educated laity, who were incapable of entering into a system of Patristic interpretation, and of arriving at the Church by so circuitous a route. But this more recent development is essentially popular, and, abandoning the

narrower criterion of primitive Christianity, embraces frankly everything that can be called Catholic, without caring to define very exactly what it means by Catholicism. So far as it attempts any intelligible account of itself, it is rather concerned with insisting on the supposed non-Catholicity of a few points which, if allowed, would mean submission to the Church of Rome. It is, therefore, by reason of its very looseness and incoherence, adapted to the apprehension of the multitude and calculated to land them indefinitely near, though never actually into the Church. For at the threshold they are met by an entirely new principle, the principle of a living teaching-authority, demanding obedience of the intellect; and to enter the Church without perceiving that this last step of the Romeward journey is absolutely different in character from every preceding step, is to be the victim of a profound but not unheard-of illusion. For to become a Catholic is not to add on one or two more items by which one's *catena* of Catholic opinions and practices is completed; but it is to accept on a totally different basis, namely, on the living authority of the Roman Church, all, and more than all, that one had already learnt to accept.

Provided this be clearly understood, it can be nothing less than a great grace to have been so

gradually trained out of one's Protestant repugnance to these various dogmas and practices, that the burden laid upon the convert by authority is light and easy, and almost insensible. It is, no doubt, very logical in the Catholic instructor first to prove the authority of the Church, and then to show that the acceptance of all she teaches follows as a matter of course. But the more extensively her teachings are already accepted on other grounds the more readily will the proofs of her authority be admitted. For if I know that a certain man makes what are to me very extraordinary and incredible statements, I shall be most reluctant indeed to admit the proofs of his credibility without the keenest and most suspicious scrutiny. Similarly, if we put precisely the same demonstration of the Church's teaching-authority before two equally educated and intelligent non-Catholics, of whom one repudiates and the other accepts all the principal distinctives of Catholic teaching, it cannot be doubted that the former not only will, but ought to be far more slow to admit the proofs of her infallibility, which at the best are never such as can compel an unwilling assent.

It is hardly possible, then, for us not to see the hand of God working this happy effect, or at least permitting it to be worked and overruling it to the good of His Church. And this view is somewhat

confirmed by the hypothesis of the extreme Evangelicals, who see in the movement so much evidence of design, that they are fain to attribute it to the machinations of the Jesuits, who are supposed to have organized the whole scheme, and, in the disguise of blameless Anglican ministers, to take active part in its prosecution.[1] This theory, were not the Jesuit of Protestant imagination as mythical as Diana Vaughan, would have much to say for itself; although the antagonism between the Anglican crypto-Jesuits and their overtly Roman *confrères* is acted with a perfection almost beyond the resources even of those trained experts in duplicity. For, indeed, if Protestants cannot ascribe the movement to God, it must be put down to the Jesuits, and to him whose agents they are presumed to be, or else to mere chance. But the last supposition is really very difficult. In the first place

[1] *e.g.* "We hope we have an average stock of charity, though not sufficient to make us believe that all the sacerdotal propagandists in our Church are perfectly free from Jesuit casuistry, or indeed are anything but literal Jesuits working with that consummate skill, patience, tact, and energy, which are the distinguishing features of this most remarkable Order." (*The Rock*, June 11, 1897.) It has been maintained elsewhere with as much foundation and more plausibility that the *Rock* is a Jesuitical organ, designed to bring ridicule and contempt on Evangelical Protestantism, and to drive all intelligent professors of the same to seek refuge with the sacerdotalists.

because, in general, the results of time are never really unravelled, and a position once universally abandoned by a people is rarely sought again. It is different if it has never been wholly rooted out of their heart and affections; but when once they have turned against it, and been taught to hate it, the chances of their turning back to it are very slight. More especially is this true where the position abandoned is the more difficult one, as in the case in point. It is far easier to disbelieve in the dogmas of Catholicism than to believe in them. The lapse from faith to unfaith, or from more faith to less faith, is easy, and in some sense natural; but the acceptance of faith, still more a return to the faith once abandoned, is against the ordinary tendencies of the mind and heart, and needs to be accounted for. The same holds even more forcibly of the return to the abandoned *practices* of the Catholic religion; to the frequentation of the Church's rites and sacraments, to confession, fasting, austerity, religious vows, none of which commend themselves to the natural man. So it is that apologists for Christianity always insist wisely on the hardness of many of its sayings, in order to enhance the miracle of its speedy propagation in a sensual and degraded world.

Nor is the present argument weakened by

dwelling on the seductive and popular character of Catholic ritual, which appeals to the senses and imagination. For to begin with, the English of to-day are not naturally very sensitive to the spell of pageantry and ceremony; and, then, the æsthetic appetite could have asserted itself in religion in a thousand ways more naturally than by a return to the rites and ceremonies of Rome.

Finally, one may ask: Is it natural, is it not rather altogether in defiance of the laws of nature, that a people beyond all others proud and insular, who make a cardinal virtue of independence, who are deficient in so many of the characteristics which cause a religion of mysteries and sacraments to be congenial to the Latinized and Celtic races—that such a people, having thrown off the yoke and the name of Catholicism, having blasphemed its most sacred dogmas, anathematized its practices, hanged and persecuted its priests, should after three hundred years of unqualified and bigoted Protestantism come to stoop down and pick up quietly one by one the dogmas and practices they had thrown away in scorn: belief in the need of a teaching Church, of Apostolic succession, of sacraments; belief in some kind of Eucharistic presence, and sacrifice; in prayers for the dead, and some kind of Purgatory: in the veneration and

invocation of the saints; more especially of the Virgin Mother; in the practice of fasting Communion; of auricular confession; in the institution of Religious Orders; belief, moreover, in many of the more modern practices, forms, methods of Rome which have no pretence to universality or even to pre-Reformation antiquity—and so on step by step till they have come to feel ashamed of the very name of Protestant, and to desire to be recognized as Catholics by their old enemy the Pope of Rome?

It is, I say, little wonder that Evangelicals see in all this the work of the Jesuits or of the devil. For though it were nothing surprising to them that men should fall away from the pure truth of Bible Christianity, yet that they should fall back into Romanism is as strange as that a stone shot into the air at random should return precisely to its point of departure. Truth is one; but error is infinitely various. That after three hundred years of modern light, men should depart from the Bible by precisely the same route as they took in the early Church, can only be explained by the machinations of those in whom the old error has steadily lived on.

But Catholics, who believe their own religion to be divine, and who know nothing of the Jesuit of Protestant fiction, may well be pardoned if they see

the finger of God in a phenomenon which cannot reasonably be attributed to chance or to any known law of the development of religious thought.

It still remains to inquire whether they should regard the movement as being positively the work of God, or as being in itself the work of delusion and error, permitted by God and overruled to the good of souls and the increase of His Church. And this is a more delicate and difficult inquiry.

The latter supposition is not so impossible as it sounds at first. It is as a rule through many errors that we blunder into the truth; and it is after doing things wrongly at first, that we come at last to do them rightly. Now we find in Anglicanism a graduated variety of quasi-Catholic positions, each defective and untenable in some respect, yet containing some element of truth in advance of the preceding stage. If then it is repugnant to our notion of Divine sanctity to maintain that God directly leads the mind into error, and, through error and delusion, into truth and reality, in other words, that He uses evil means to a good end; yet it is conceivable that He should permit the mind of the sincere Anglican to deceive itself frequently in its quest of truth, as a good teacher will often do, thus conducting it from hypothesis to hypothesis, till it is driven into a corner from

which there is no exit but through the door of the Church.

It is then possible to hold that the progress of the mind from pure Protestantism to certain imperfect Catholic beliefs mingled with error, is not due to the direct and special working of God's Spirit within the soul, but to other natural causes overruled by God in certain cases to the conversion of that soul and to its complete deliverance from all the teachings of heresy.

And the same explanation might be applied to the whole Anglo-Catholic movement, by which we understand the progress of a large party in the English Church from pure Protestantism in the direction of Catholicism. It is possible to suppose that this movement is not the result of any direct impulse or instinct of the Holy Ghost, and yet that it is permitted by God and overruled to the conversion of many to the Catholic Faith.

What might incline some Catholics to this view is the fact that, many of the beliefs in question, though involving a denial of Protestant error, and an approximation to Catholic truth, are notwithstanding, simply un-Catholic or anti-Catholic and as such cannot have God for their author. That God should guide men to believe in a Church teaching with Divine authority and ministering supernatural

means of grace is credible enough; but that He should guide them to recognize the Church of England as satisfying these requirements is to them incredible; and yet these are not two separate beliefs in the mind of the Anglican, but one. Again, the ever varying and ever incoherent account which Anglicanism gives of itself; its seemingly disingenuous subterfuges to escape the ruthless pressure brought to bear upon it by Roman logic on the one side, and by Protestant logic on the other; its manifest feebleness and confusion as an intellectual position, make it hard to believe that it can be in any direct sense the work of the God of reason and order. Add to this, the strong anti-Catholic virus displayed by some of its leaders, the methods of their warfare, the seemingly wilful blindness, prejudice, unfairness of their controversy, and we can easily understand why so many Catholics are reluctant to see the direct working of the Holy Ghost in a party which not only aims at rivalling the Church; but which would gladly see her driven out of the country altogether, as a schismatical body.

Still, it must be confessed that such a view seems quite inadequate to account for the phenomenon we are considering. It fails to explain why this deviation from evangelical Protestantism should follow a road which is, *à priori*, so difficult, so

improbable, so uncongenial to the present national temper and bias as that which leads towards Rome. It opens the way to religious scepticism for many converts, who, should they feel constrained to deny the guidance of God in the past, might not unreasonably question the security of their trust in His present guidance, not only as to their beliefs but as to what might be called their spiritual experiences. It ignores the universal principle that, as all truth and goodness is from God alone, so even that element of truth on which every lie is founded and of which every error is a perversion, and also that element of right of which every wrong is the distortion, is from God. It forgets that although it may be untrue that the English Church inherits the promises made to the Apostles, yet it is better to believe that she does so, than not to believe in those promises at all; and that even though it may be a mistake to hold that Christ is really present in the Eucharists of the English Church, yet this error involves a belief in the words of Christ concerning the Eucharist in general which most certainly is a true, implicit act of faith. For the premises are implicitly affirmed in the conclusion; and even if the conclusion be false, yet the implied premises may be true. Thus if a Catholic makes an act of faith in some absurdity which he sincerely but erroneously believes to be

revealed by God, the explicit and false belief is not from God; but the implicit and true belief in revelation, which he exercises at the same time, is undoubtedly from God. As regards the implicit error God holds Himself permissively, not hindering it, but for wise reasons allowing things to run their natural course, perhaps even overruling evil in the interests of good. But as regards the implied truth God is active and directly causative.

And such, it seems to us, is His intervention in this Catholic revival which we are studying. The one idea in which all Anglicans, of whatever degree, are united, and by which they are divided sharply from those whom they call "Protestants," is the conception of the Church as a supernatural society, which idea finds its full development in Roman Catholicism.[1] From first to last this idea is a seed of Divine truth struggling, in spite of the most unfavourable environments, to reach its legitimate expansion. If in its

[1] Dr. Hunt (*Religious Thought in England in the Nineteenth Century*) writes of the beginnings of Tractarianism: "Evangelicalism was the only really great religious power; but its principles were not essentially different from those of the Nonconformists. A distinct ground was wanted for the defence of the Church as a Divine institution. . . . The inspiration came from Keble, and the impulse from Froude; then the work was taken up by Newman, who found that he must force on the public mind that great article of the Creed. 'I believe in one Catholic and Apostolic Church.'"

growth it is often aborted, stunted, twisted; if in but one of a thousand instances it bears its full fruit, all this may be put down, sometimes to inevitable circumstances, sometimes to human perversity and stupidity. But all the vital energy which is thus defeated or perverted is from God; and whatever fruit of goodness and truth it does yield, such as, the revival of faith in the stricter sense; the revolt against crude rationalism; the respect for historical and primitive Christianity; the readiness to accept mysteries as an integral part of Christian revelation; the clearer and firmer grasp of the Incarnation in all its bearings on the Church and on humanity; and together with this, the elevation of spiritual tone and character produced by these beliefs in individuals and masses; the devotion and charity which has been enkindled and diffused; the abundant graces conveyed to those, who in all good faith and sincerity, make devout use of what they believe to be valid sacraments; above all the continual uneasiness and dissatisfaction of the movement with itself; its aspirations after unity and communion with the rest of Christendom—all this is undoubtedly to be ascribed to Him. Nor is there any warrant in current theology for supposing that after sufficient faith for Christian salvation is secured, God's wisdom demands that the seed sown should in each single

case be brought to that maturity to which of its own nature and structure it tends to arrive. He is well content with partial results and distributes truth in diverse measure to diverse men. Else we should have to maintain that all, even the savages on some undiscovered isle, who die without the fulness of Catholic belief, die in bad faith—a monstrous and unheard-of proposition. Nor does the fact of local nearness to the Church alter the case, where inculpable prejudices and confusions place her at an intellectual distance scarcely measurable in a lifetime, at the ordinary rate of mental progress. Therefore, that God gives a certain measure of Catholic truth to an individual Protestant does not mean that He is necessarily going to carry the work to perfection; and similarly if the Anglican movement never produced a single convert, it would none the less be the work of God, as far as it goes in the right direction.

The perversities, the inconsistencies, and the occasionally un-Christian and indefensible tactics of Anglicans, ought not to furnish any argument to Catholics against the Divine authorship of the movement. God's Spirit has always to strive with man, and to be aggrieved and dishonoured in a thousand ways before it can give effect to its designs. It is the law of the natural, as well as of the supernatural order. The whole history of the Catholic Church

exemplifies it on every page. As for controversial unfairness and bitterness, it may be questioned whether controversy can be anything but unfair and bitter. But as we should be loth to identify Catholicism with Catholic controversy, so neither may we confound Anglicanism with Anglican controversy. To credit the Holy Spirit with the latter might indeed be an approach to the unforgivable sin.

Yet, even as regards their controversy, there is a danger of our being unreasonably impatient and narrow in our censures. To him who has caught the one true light in which a question should be viewed, and who can thenceforth never view it in any other, the conjectures and criticisms of others less favourably stationed seem necessarily absurd. Even converts soon grow so accustomed to the Catholic conception of the Church, that the Anglican controversy becomes as uninteresting to them as a well-worn riddle whose answer has been familiar to them for years. They come to forget how extremely perplexing the said riddle may be for those whom some lurking fallacy throws off the right scent. As for those brought up in the Catholic faith, it would indeed be wonderful if they could throw themselves with complete success into the real frame of mind of a sincere Anglican, or do more

than deal with that very abstract and imperfect presentment of it which can be expressed in words; and if at times they fail egregiously in their efforts to do so, surely they are hardly to be blamed, when one considers the Protean, albeit unavoidable, shiftiness of Anglican theory. We say "unavoidable," for that a growing idea should vary in its expression and explanation; that after sundry patchings, mendings, and economies, it should from time to time wholly discard the language in which it has clothed itself, casting off the garments it has outgrown in favour of larger and more suitable garments, is inevitable and necessary, and does not mean that the idea formerly expressed was different, but merely that it has grown. The great variety of expression which Anglicanism exhibits in its representatives, according to the particular stage of development which its idea has attained in each case, is perfectly natural and consistent with real substantial unity of principle. Among Catholics, the notion of the Church is full-formed, and therefore the same in all; but in respect to other matters, where the mind of the Church is as yet undetermined, a like variety and inconsistency often obtains.

The truth is, that when men are driven on by some instinct, or by the force of some idea, as deeply buried from clear apprehension as an instinct,

their attempts to explain themselves and their conduct must always be ludicrously inadequate; especially when the issue to which they are being carried is altogether repugnant to their present conscious principles and beliefs, as Romanism is, to the avowed and self-acknowledged tenets of a loyal Anglican. The idea of a Church in any Catholic sense of the term is as much out of place in a strictly Protestant mind, as a cuckoo's egg in a hedge-sparrow's nest. Wheat and tares are different and hostile growths, and will never amalgamate or live peaceably together. They may be mixed up and intertwined, but never united. The attempt to trace them to one root is bound to fail. Therefore the confusion and tangle of Anglican theology, if it is considered as co-existing with a steady advance towards Catholicism, far from being a presumption against the supernatural origin of the movement, is precisely and only what we should expect to find in such a contingency. It is the confusion of a man drawn in opposite directions by his affection and his judgment, and who tries to conceal the antagonism from himself, and find a *modus vivendi* by which both interests can be reconciled. If then it is not possible to deny that this movement is to be ascribed to the immediate and direct working of the Spirit of Truth, not indeed in the English Church, but in

those whom it desires to lead out of that Church, what ought to be our attitude towards it? how should we co-operate with God's designs?

Obviously it will be our duty to desire and procure that the movement may spread and strengthen in every direction. As far as it appears at present there is no other conceivable hope for any extensive Catholicizing of England save through the instrumentality of this party. Our conversions from the Nonconformist bodies and from Low Church Anglicanism are too occasional and exceptional in character to give reason for believing that there is any steady Catholic influence at work in those quarters. As has been said, our language is too different from theirs to permit us to reach them save through an intermediary, such as we find in the High Church party. Nor yet is there any thinkable possibility of "corporate reunion." For such reunion is necessarily a corporate action involving one will and one mind in the whole body. Unless then we can suppose that High Anglicanism will be some day completely victorious over the Latitudinarian and Evangelical schools, no corporate move in the direction of Rome is conceivable. But this is very unlikely; for although being a new movement under the influence of a growing idea, High Anglicanism has a vigour and vitality which more than

outweighs the numerical preponderance of the Low party; yet in the Latitudinarian school a counter-idea is at work which will dispute every inch of the ground with it.

What we might hope for, not unreasonably, is the accession to Catholicism of large numbers of individuals at some future date; and to the realization of this hope we may briefly turn our consideration.

Let us suppose that the recent Papal Bull on Anglican Orders had possessed, instead of mere theological cogency, the clearness and inevitability of an easy mathematical demonstration, so as to leave no loophole of escape for even the most confused and untheological mind; and let us suppose, moreover, that it had made all Anglican claims to continuity and quasi-Catholicism evidently ridiculous and unthinkable for any sane mind, what would the result have been as regards Catholicism?

No one who was justified before in his resistance to the Papal claims would be now justified in submitting to them simply on account of the collapse of Anglicanism. His principles might compel him to seek union with the Greeks or with the Old Catholics; but to submit to Rome for the sake of her sacraments and her continuity, and at the same time secretly to deny her claim to infallibility,

would be an act of fraud. Yet no doubt many of the more advanced school would have been driven to a closer consideration and to a less reluctant acceptance of Roman claims. There would have been a little rush of such conversions followed by a dwindling stream from the lower levels of Anglicanism. But the majority of the party, in no way ripe for such a step, would have lapsed to latitudinarianism or scepticism; and the movement would have soon died out altogether. Had such a demonstration of the truth been possible in the nature of things, the Holy Father, as guardian of the truth, would scarcely have been free to withhold it; though worldly wisdom would certainly have condemned the economy which slays the goose for the sake of the golden eggs. As a matter of fact, the result has been such as we Catholics could not in conscience have aimed at, yet, since it is brought about, independently of any deliberate designs on our part, we cannot but rejoice in it. For it has drawn the members of the High party together in the interests of common self-defence; it has called forth from them a notable display of anti-Roman virus which will tend to exonerate them in the eyes of other Protestants from the charge of Jesuitical treachery; it has stimulated their leaders to find a new *modus vivendi*

for English Orders and Anglo-Catholicism, it has elicited from the Archbishops a document sufficiently ambiguous to be accepted by the lowest and the highest, and which, by bringing the former to speak the same language as the latter, will bring many of them eventually to attach the same sense to it. In fine, the spectre which beckoned so many to Rome has been cloaked once more; and Anglo-Catholicism has received another lease of life, and with a little judicious repair may hold out yet for many a voyage, and may weather many a worse gale.

Some day, no doubt, as evidence accumulates, the spectre will refuse to be laid, and the impossibility of Anglicanism as a stable position will stand out in glaring nakedness before the eyes of all; but the longer that day is delayed, the greater will be the number, not only of those who year by year are draughted into the Church, but of those who at that moment will be found proximately disposed to receive the full faith.

Everything, therefore, that tends to weaken the Anglican movement, or bring it to a head prematurely, is a calamity from a Catholic point of view. Even individual conversions of any note have their regrettable side. For by such an event perhaps a hundred incipient Anglicans are scared

back or at least checked in their advance, who, if they would never have arrived at Rome themselves, would, by forwarding and extending the movement, have been eventually the parents of innumerable conversions at some future date. Fortunately such disastrous results are much neutralized by the practice of explaining such "apostasies" from Anglicanism as the result of madness, or weak-mindedness, or of a total failure to grasp either the Anglican or the Roman position.

Were Catholics as crafty and unprincipled as they are supposed to be, they would never, as they do, sacrifice eventual gain to some petty present triumph; they would be more anxious for the roots of a future harvest to spread underground than to secure an immediate but feeble crop of conversions day by day; they would defer the reception of a convert as long as it was possible to suppose him in good faith, and would never disturb the good faith of those who were satisfied with Anglicanism; they would wait and would allow the "idea" of Anglicanism to work itself out as slowly as it liked—the slower the better—but would never hurry it in any way.

Yet largely through the exigencies of duty, partly through that ovine artlessness which has ever distinguished the faithful, they follow a precisely

contrary method, which, were it not for the overruling of Providence, might do much to retard and weaken the progress of Anglicanism. But what with the heat of controversy generated on both sides, and what with partly inevitable misunderstandings and misrepresentations, a spirit of mutual antagonism has recently been developed which, however regrettable from many points of view, will have the happy effect of consolidating the Anglican party in itself for a time, and of strengthening and spreading its roots, and so preparing the way for a much larger eventual ingathering of souls into the Church than would be possible to hope for from the only tactics which we are free in conscience to avail ourselves of.

This is how the question presents itself from a purely Roman Catholic standpoint to one who cannot fail to see in the Anglican movement the direct action of God in the interest of His Church and of the spiritual welfare of this country. Nothing here said should disturb the serenity of Anglicans in good faith, nor can these remarks have the faintest controversial value, begging, as they do, the whole question at issue between us and them.

July, 1897.

IV.

"LIBERAL" CATHOLICISM.

A RECENT writer of repute, himself a Catholic, speaks incidentally in the preface to a work which he is introducing to the public, of "the more modern Catholicism which is ready to make part with the world." The expression is one calculated to give us pause and to make us ask if such a tendency is in any degree characteristic of modern Catholicism; and, if it be, whether it is a tendency to trust or to distrust. We do not, of course, speak of that tendency to worldliness on the part of the faithful individually which always must prevail while the Church is still militant; but of a conscious and outspoken disposition on the part of Catholic thinkers to come to terms with the civilization in which we are placed; to justify many of its hitherto repudiated judgments; to bridge over as far as possible the gulf which so far has been treated as impassable.

There is no more pressing problem just now than the precise relation of Catholic Christianity to the cause of civilization and progress. Our adversaries

accuse us, not unnaturally, of teaching men to neglect the temporal interests of this world for the sake of the eternal interests of the next; of being the enemies of modern advancement in every form, if not by aggressive opposition, at least by a studied silence and indifference. Doubtless the charge would not have been ungrounded in the days when men were so possessed with a conviction of Christ's immediate advent as to esteem all labour bestowed on this world as lost; and in so far as a like apprehension may have prevailed from time to time in the later history of the Church, the accusation may have received some further justification. On the other hand, it is not uncommon to find many advocates of Christianity — not only outside, but also inside the Catholic Church—somewhat overanxious to repudiate what seems to them an excessively "other-world" view of the Gospel and its aims, and to demonstrate as far as possible that the interests of Christianity truly understood and those of modern industrial progress are in every respect identical. For example, the clerical author of a tract called *Christian Socialism*,[1] writes:

Very often when we go into church we find the congregation singing some hymn which expresses the utmost weariness of life, and the keenest desire to die

[1] Clarion Pamphlet, No. 19.

and to pass to the "better land." Stout old gentlemen and smart young women sing it lustily; and we know that they are singing a lie; for if they were told that they were to die to-morrow, they would not find it at all "weary waiting here." This is an instance of the heresy of modern popular religion. Christ taught exactly the opposite. The vast majority of His miracles restored men to health and life, and enabled them to go back to their work, and to enjoy the measure of life that God allots to mankind. Death in old age, when a man's work is done, is not a sad thing; but death in youth or in the prime of life is piteous, horrible, abnormal; and so are sickness and deformity. Christ, then, devoted a large portion of His time to fighting against disease and premature death; and He wept when a friend had been carried off in his prime. . . . But further we learn from the "signs" of Christ, not only to save life and health, but to increase its comfort, as He did at the feeding of the multitudes—and its merriment, as He did at the Cana marriage.

However this writer may keep verbally within the pale of orthodoxy, it is hard to resist the impression that, to his mind the main purpose of Christ's mission was the temporal happiness of humanity, secured and in some way complemented by the promise of everlasting reward, for good citizens. It is "heresy," he thinks, to feel weary waiting here, to long to "be dissolved and to be with Christ" in a "better land." Christ, he says, taught "exactly the opposite," namely, that health

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Lazarus was that His friend had missed the best pleasures of life by being cut off in his prime. The "good news" was not that poverty, sickness, sorrow, persecution, temptation, death, though for the most part inevitable, had a bright side and might be turned to gold when touched with the Cross; but that they were to be no more, that the former things were to pass away; that earth was to be turned into a "better land" by the force of industrial progress, the fairest flower of the Gospel.

This writer is in substantial agreement with numbers of well-meaning persons, both lay and clerical, who are anxious by all means to pare Christianity down to something that will fit in with the popular notions of progress, and to gain it a new lease of life by proving its serviceableness to social and political ends. Nor herein do they deviate in any respect from that Erastian view of Christianity according to which the Church exists only for the moralizing of the State and for enforcing obedience to social law by means of supernatural sanctions

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itor, the discoverer, the dramatist, for the saints, martyrs, virgins, and confessors whom the Catholic Church "delighted to honour" and to propose for the emulation of the faithful. Social utility, in the narrow sense of ministration to public prosperity, comfort, and amusement, is naturally the title to canonization in an Erastian establishment.

It is habitual with the upholders of this style of neo-Christianity (who, even if they be opponents of an established Church, accept its principle in subordinating religion to sociology, and making utility the criterion of doctrine and discipline) to lay emphasis on the temporal ministrations of Christ and His Apostles; on the rewards assigned in the Parable of the Last Judgment to the corporal works of mercy; on all other indications (and they are many) that Christ came for the redemption of the body. They also insist truly that, however first-hand almsgiving may in certain ways react beneficially on the giver, yet a wide-seeing, collective, organized charity, which looks to removing the causes and conditions of suffering, is imperatively

demanded by Christian principles. Christians should be to the fore in all such public undertakings, in the founding of hospitals and like institutions, in the opening of parks and pleasure-grounds, in the extension of useful knowledge, in the sanitation of dwellings for the poor, in the providing of work for all, in the prevention of cruelty, injustice, oppression; all ministering to all, as well as each to each. Christianity, they say, is the only religion that can supply and keep alive that altruism of which it is the creator, and by which alone the fatal consequences of a selfish socialism or a selfish individualism can be averted.

The practical outcome of this view of the Church's aim and destiny is a vigorous effort on the part of such thinkers to throw themselves heart and soul into what they call the cause of progress and advance; to show by every exhibition of sympathy and co-operation that they regard the interests of Christianity and of the present European civilization as identical; that they will by no means admit an inevitable and hopeless antagonism between the two movements. There is, they must admit, an antithesis between Christianity and worldliness or the world; yet the world is not the State or secular society, but a certain tendency prevalent to all men, which it is the effect of true Christian civilization

to counteract, transforming the kingdoms of this world into the kingdoms of God and of His Christ. Whence, they ask, are these cries against social injustices, inequalities, uncharities, whence the response they awaken in the public mind, if not from the Christian spirit with which modern civilization is impregnated? Brotherhood, society, collectivism, the greatest happiness of the greatest number, altruism, humanitarianism, the emancipation of women, the dignity of labour, are not all these potent, energetic ideas drawn from the Gospel? Or if collectivism be a fallacy, yet does not individualism need to be tempered by a certain charity and mercy which can be kept alive only by the religion of Christ? In a word, progressive civilization (*i.e.*, European as opposed to Asiatic) owes its origin and its vital principles to Christianity: therefore let it look to itself lest, in rejecting Christianity, it unwittingly open its own veins. Social and political measures which tend to lessen sin and suffering, to liberate and elevate the down-trodden masses, are not merely expedient and just, as they would be even in a pagan State, but are imperative duties on the part of a Christian people. It is because Christian principles are ignored in economics and politics that such evils exist.

Now, it would be as dangerous as untrue to

reject this view indiscriminately; to assert that the causes of Christ and of civilization are hostile or even unconnected; or to acquiesce, without a certain protest, in the proposition that the business of this country could not be transacted on Gospel principles for one day without irreparable disaster. It was the heresy of Luther to assert such a hopeless distortion of our nature through the Fall as to render every output of that nature necessarily corrupt and hostile to the interests of grace; to look on the Church and the world, on the eternal and the temporal, on the spirit and the flesh as antagonistic, not merely *de facto*, but of necessity. But Catholic Christianity, while acknowledging a *de facto* antagonism, denies its right of existence altogether, and strives by every possible means to destroy it. Its quarrel is not with civilization in general, nor with the ideal civilization, but with the counterfeit, with that which claims to be civilization and is not; nor indeed does it war indiscriminately with the world in this matter, but only with those principles which are embodied in the abstract idea of "worldliness" and are really hostile to the world's best interests.

We must maintain stoutly with regard to society and the State, what we hold with regard to the individual, namely, that faith perfects science, that grace complements nature; that its office is, not to

destroy, but to fulfil. By this, it is not maintained that even the fullest practical and speculative mastery of the Christian faith will satisfy all the intellectual and bodily needs of the individual, so as to secure the perfect development of all that is best in him. No one can pretend that heroic sanctity involves the highest mental culture, still less does it demand pre-eminence in business qualities, or in the usual conditions of what is called a successful or pleasurable career. Where these or similar temporal gifts are present, there religion crowns them, by controlling them and directing them to a high end; by giving them a definite and worthy scope. Also it must be allowed that all these things which are "added" to the one thing needful, are secondary and, absolutely speaking, dispensable; that the "religious faculty" being that which is highest among our rational faculties, its perfection should be secured, if necessary, at the cost of everything else. For, after all, the most brilliant gifts and graces directed to no definite end cannot save life from being frivolous, mean, and contemptible; whereas the most insignificant lot directed to a spiritual end or an eternal cause, wins a dignity worthy of all that is best in us.

Still religion, or sanctity, though independent in the abstract, is by no means indifferent to these

"additions." Its influence over our temporal interests is often directive and positive, insomuch as it sees "we have need of these things," and bids us secure them as conditions sometimes favourable to higher interests; often it is permissive or negative in so far as it allows much which it does not enjoin, exercising as it were a mere *veto* where a point is reached beyond which higher good is perilled. It will encourage and foster the fullest and healthiest development of the intellect, the raising and purifying of the higher æsthetic tastes, the strengthening restraint of all the natural and social affections, the taming and utilizing of the passions; it will make a man hardy, simple, courageous, industrious, temperate, chaste, in every way virtuous—for all these conditions not only favour and promote his highest spiritual well-being, but belong to the integrity and fulness of human life which is, so to say, a many-membered organism whose every part profits by the well-being of its fellow-parts. Religion is the chief and governing function, but it is not the only function. The members do not exist solely for the head; but head and members for one another and for the whole. It will forbid and exclude all that is directly contrary to these advantageous conditions; all irregular concentration on lower good to the prejudice of higher; all that intense pre-occupation

about food and clothing, enjoyment and excitement, which so characterizes the animal-minded civilization of our day, and which is the root of the lowest and most aggressive form of selfishness, as well the enemy of that orderly and proportionate unfolding of our capacities which makes the lower serve and wait on the higher. In other words, though civilization is not the direct aim of Christianity, yet it is its indirect effect, given due conditions; it is the natural environment which Christianity desiderates for itself and strives to secure.

But not every or any form of culture can be regarded as such; for there is false and true, apparent and real. Non-Christian civilization can produce a type, in many features admirable and akin to the Christian ideal of culture, but not in all; and in some wholly opposite. If, however, we speak of true culture in the individual, we must affirm that its interests and those of religion are largely correlative, in no way antagonistic. Both alike require that a sense of duty, a reverence for truth and right, should be the governing principle of life; and that death should be preferred to merited dishonour. They agree in their conception of perfect manhood, of man at his best. But if we speak of some pseudo-culture, there must necessarily be a conflict with religion. One who thinks that life is given to him

chiefly for rude animal enjoyment, or for business, or for social pleasures, or even for literary and artistic self-indulgence, may well regard the claims of religion as hostile, unless he can fabricate a sort of "muscular Christianity" for himself, or take a page from *Christian Socialism*.

Now there seems no reason why we should not treat the relation of the Church to modern progress and civilization as in nearly every way parallel to that which obtains between grace and nature in the individual.

The Church has her own ideal of civilization, which she holds to be the true one, and which she tends indirectly to realize. The world also has its own ideal, which in every age and country is to some greater or lesser extent incompatible with the former. Hence, unless the Church is passive and allows herself to be carried away captive, a conflict there always has been and always must be, not between the Church and civilization, but between the true and the false civilization. To require, on the one hand, that the Church should throw herself heartily and indiscriminately, with blind trust and confidence, into the stream of modern progressive ideas, is the extravagance towards which a *soi-disant* "Liberal" school gravitates in virtue of its principles, or the haziness of its principles. On

the other hand, there is the no less reprehensible extravagance of an indiscriminate condemnation of the modern movement, which fails to recognize it as a mixed product, as the resultant of a conflict between hostile principles, of which some are altogether Christian, whether deriving through the light of conscience or the teaching of the Catholic Church. The Church may neither identify herself with "progress" nor isolate herself from it. Her attitude must always be the difficult and uncomfortable one of partial agreement and partial dissent. Indeed, it is altogether similar to that which faith must maintain with regard to the advance of science and knowledge. The *soi-disant* "Liberal" is all agog for embracing the very latest results of science and history, and would see the Church decked out in the newest fashions of the day and chattering the shibboleths of the passing hour. He would have her "smart" and "up to date," and thus wipe away for ever her eternal reproach of lagging behind the times. But in truth we must not shrink from the paradox that contemporary science and history is always wrong; not wholly wrong, nor void of ample grounds for priding itself on advance; but mingling so much extravagance and excess with its reason, so much dross with its gold, as to make it invariably safe to hold back and wait.

It is truth "in solution," but not attainable apart and in its purity till it has long ceased to be a theme of discussion and excitement. Then it is that the Church will quietly adopt and assimilate what no longer admits of controversy. There is an antagonism between faith and false science or the extravagances of true science; and in like manner, between the Church and false progress or the excesses and errors of a progress which mingles good and evil. Hence, an antagonism nearly always between the Church and the fashion of the day. Her very offices of moulding, leavening, checking, correcting, all imply a certain resistance to be overcome, not without conflict.

This, however, is what the "Liberal" will not abide for a moment. It is not that his faith in the Church is necessarily weak, but that his faith in the world and in modern progress is crude and strong. He knows well that the Church must eventually give her full sympathy to all that is true and good, and being convinced that most of what seems so must be so, he is impatient with the suicidal over-caution, the apathy, the lethargy of the Catholic body.

Rightly understood, there is a "Liberalism" which, combined in due proportion with "Conservatism," is a necessary ingredient in the life of every society, and therefore in that of the Church.

But the true Liberalism is really for the very few who have the leisure, capacity, and education for thinking widely, deeply, and temperately; whereas, for the great majority, who form the receptive and conservative element of society, and who have none of these advantages, they must take their thought ready-made from others. It is when Liberalism becomes "popular," when it is affected by the half-educated, and is made the catch-word for a party, that it becomes ridiculous, shallow, and irritating to any one who knows the patience and labour which must be expended—how often vainly!—in the formation of a correct all-round judgment touching most questions which the Church has to deal with.

Conservatism can well be the badge of a party without any contradiction in terms, but Liberalism never, since it is a principle of variety and not of uniformity. Indeed, nothing hinders the sane and healthy progressive movements of the Church more than the crude extravagances of the self-constituted *coryphæi* of advance, who contrive to disgust all men of judgment, and to drive their sympathies over to the opposite side. No doubt every party is frequently brought into disgrace by its camp-followers, who are always its loudest, most popular, and most incompetent exponents; but anything like

a "Liberal" movement is tenfold more liable to such a doom.

What man of taste, not to say, of Catholic instinct, would care to associate himself, even in his own mind, with those who are willing to whittle away everything that is distinctive of Catholicism, for the sake of making an unconditional peace with a civilization such as that which now prevails in "progressive" nations, which, whatever good elements it may contain, and they are not few, is overtly unbelieving, gross, and animal-minded; which understands "progress" only in the sense of the multiplication of comforts and the extension of commerce; which assumes, as a first practical principle, a view of life which it is a first principle of the Church to deny?

If to be "Liberal" is to be a utilitarian of the vulgarest type; if it is to have a secret contempt for anything that savours of mysticism, or that cannot be rationalized or made "common-sense;" if it is to declaim against the religious state; to censure the hidden service of contemplative orders as wasted, as something better "given to the poor;" if it is to be dead to the "liturgical sense," and to have lost all love and reverence for what has come down to us through the ages; if it means playing fast and loose with dogmas which martyrs have died for; in a

word, if it means obliging the world to the extent of sawing through the very bough that we are sitting on; if this is to be Liberal and broad, then be our soul with the narrow-minded and let our last end be like his!

Taking the words in their literal sense, there is no sane man who would not claim to be at once liberal and conservative; but, so far as they are party names, he is a wise man who declines to label or brand himself even in his own thought, and thereby really to sacrifice his liberty of mind by introducing into it an unnecessary bias.

We are of necessity members of the human family, of the Christian and Catholic Church, and as such must in some sense wear a party badge and bear our share of the discredit brought upon the body by the sentiments and conduct of those with whom we are associated. But beyond what duty or greater good exacts of us, surely it is wisdom to swear neither by Paul nor by Apollos nor by Cephas, but to be a Catholic, unqualified even by the glorious but hopelessly perverted title of "Liberal"—

> Defamed by every charlatan
> And soil'd with all ignoble use.

May, 1898.

V.

"RATIONALISM IN RELIGION."

THE popular preacher, teacher, or writer is, as Carlyle says in an essay on Goethe, one who "stands on our own level or a hair's-breadth higher; he shows us a truth which we can see without shifting our present intellectual position. . . . No sooner does he speak than all and sundry of us feel as if we had been wishing to speak that very thing, as if we ourselves might have spoken it. . . . What clearness, brilliancy, justice, penetration! Who can doubt that this man is right when so many thousand votes are ready to back him?" He is not always intentionally popular, not always one who designedly finds out and says what the public wishes to hear, or who studiously avoids reminding it of unwelcome truths; but more often he is in general sympathy with popular opinion and sentiment, being in a certain sense the man of his day and time—formed by it, rather than forming it. It is as the utterance of a popular preacher that the following document may be considered

representative of the sentiments of a large and growing section of English Churchmen.

A PLEA FOR THE OPTIONAL USE OF THE ATHANASIAN CREED.

It is generally assumed by controversialists that those who desire that the use of the Athanasian Creed should be made (at least) optional, and that its recitation should not be forced on unwilling congregations, are unbelievers in the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation which it unfolds and defines. Our position, on the other hand, is that those who really believe in these great truths and realize their deep mystery, are much troubled by the vain attempt to describe the Divine relations by the terms of an obsolete philosophy. They object, not because they do not believe, but because they believe so entirely; because their faith is insight they resent a form of expression which must do injustice to the sublime truths which it aims at unfolding.

There has been too much worship of high-sounding phrases, as though they must carry us upwards on wings of aspiration.

Such phrases are very satisfactory to the man who does not care to be at the trouble of thinking what they mean. But to the devout soul dwelling on the exceeding mystery of the Trinity, these endeavours to explain it and to fix it exactly seem intensely irreverent, the outcome of an anthropomorphic age, which thought that the Nature and Image of God could be described in the same sort of way as a picture or a bit of scenery. The Holy Spirit has taught the Church a deepened reverence since the days when this hymn was composed,

and to recite it is to do violence to His most illuminating inspirations. Because we believe so intensely in the Trinity of Persons and Unity of God, because we see in the one the inspiration of our social life and in the other the fountain of all real adoration, we resent the attempt of an ever defining age to obscure the eternal truth by describing it in the language of the philosophy of a single period.

As to the so-called damnatory clauses, we are quite aware that they may be rightly interpreted. The man (if such an one there can be imagined) who wilfully rejects the revelation of God does his best to destroy the highest possibilities of life within himself. But the statement of his loss is made twice over in an almost savage fashion, utterly misleading to ordinary minds, recalling the spirit of the days that had better be forgotten, when torture was used as an instrument of propagating the religion that was founded on love. "Without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. He cannot be saved." No one who realized the Spirit of Christ would really wish to stand up and use such language. They would wish to explain or qualify it, and they would resent the inferences that could easily be drawn from it. That good men do think that they desire to use it is only a proof of the blinding and hardening effect of taking up a controversial position on the deepest subjects merely because it has been inherited.

We have to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, not as a mere form of words, but as the inspiration of life. We have come to see this increasingly in the present age. The mere assertion of doctrine, apart from an effort to live on it and by it,

is the most deadening thing in the world; it leaves a man with a name to live but really and truly "dead." It is difficult to see how a controversial document like the Athanasian Creed, could ever serve to teach the truths of the Trinity and the Incarnation as inspirations of life. It is much more likely to set men's wits at work disputing about them and contradicting them.

The recitation of this Creed is in most churches a hindrance and a stumbling-block to the most thoughtful worshippers, and it is unintelligible to the less thoughtful. It is only a joy to the controversialist and the precisionist. The one sort had better practise the mortification of their desires while they are in church, and the other had better go and seek God in the ineffable mysteries of nature in order to correct those attempts to define the indefinable which only obscure the light and hinder their own growth.[1]

All this is put forward, not as a private and personal opinion, but as the sentiment of those numerous congregations which desire the abolition of the compulsory use of the Athanasian Creed.

There is nothing new in latitudinarianism with its hostility to definite dogmatic statement; but what is somewhat new and surprising is the growing tendency to dress out latitudinarianism in the clothes of Catholic orthodoxy—a tendency of which the above citation is a rather startling example.

It is, we are told, not because they do not believe

[1] *Westminster Gazette*, Nov. 29, 1898.

the Athanasian Creed, but because they believe it so much more intensely than Catholics do that Churchmen of a certain school object to it; not because its teaching is too mysterious, but because it is not half mysterious enough. Dwelling upon the exceeding mystery of the Trinity with a faith, strangely identified with "insight," seeing the Eternal Reality in itself by some gift of spiritual discernment, and comparing that Reality, that Trinity and Unity, with "these endeavours to explain it and to fix it exactly," they are pained by and resent the utter inadequacy of "a form of expression which must do injustice to the sublime truths which it aims at unfolding." The description of a picture or of a bit of scenery, however inadequate, may bear comparison with the original; certain aspects and points of what we see with bodily eyes may be expressed in words; but no one who knows by "insight" what the Trinity is, will allow any value to the "intensely irreverent" description attempted in the Athanasian Creed.

All this seems to imply that these Churchmen possess a knowledge of the Trinity not conveyed to them through human language, or symbols, or creeds, but derived from direct intuition or insight into that mystery—an intuition strangely confounded with faith, which is usually regarded as

the "evidence of things not seen." Beholding the Trinity face to face and then turning to the laboured descriptions of "an anthropomorphic age," they find these latter simply shocking in their irreverence.

This is not one bit what the writer really means; yet it is nevertheless what he says; and this confusion in expression is precisely due to the impossible attempt to cover rationalism with the cloak of orthodoxy, and to represent "believing less" and "believing more" as being the same thing.

There is, indeed, in his statement, if we may borrow its own expression, "too much worship of high-sounding phrases; satisfactory to the man who does not care to be at the trouble of thinking what they mean." Subjected to ruthless logic they mean exactly nothing, but it is not fair criticism so to deal with faults and limitations of utterance when the underlying meaning is so plain to discern; truth is often put best in the form of a "bull;" and therefore we will trouble ourselves to inquire as to the precise position implied in the utterance, and to offer some criticisms upon it.

For it is not by confusing and muddling the issues at stake, nor by violating ordinary language in the endeavour to cover opposite meanings under similar sounds, that unity and agreement can ever

be reached; but rather by striving to understand ever more exactly, and to express ever more faithfully our own position and that of our opponents. Diagnosis is the first step towards healing, even when it does not show the ailment to be merely imaginary. It is not so much because of what they hold, as because they do not know what they hold, that warring sects fail to come to an agreement; as is often the way in a quarrel.

The true meaning of the statement is contained in the assertions that the "faith once delivered to the saints" is not to be regarded as a mere form of words (here indeed we are all agreed), but "as the inspiration of life;" and that it is "difficult to see how a controversial document like the Athanasian Creed could ever serve to teach the truths of the Trinity and the Incarnation as *inspirations of life*." This last phrase is explained where it is said: "Because we believe so intensely in the Trinity of Persons and Unity of God; because we see in the one the inspiration of social life, and in the other the fountain of all real adoration, we resent the attempt . . . to obscure the eternal truth."

In a word, so far as revealed truth is practical, so far as a belief is a means to make men morally better, so far, and no further, it is a matter of faith

worth contending for. The mere perfecting of the mind—man's best part, by truth—*θεωρία*, knowledge for the sake of knowledge, is of no consequence in God's eyes. It is not so much, Blessed are the pure, for they shall see God; as, Blessed are they that see God, for they shall be pure. God in Three Persons, with one identical Mind, Work and Will, shows us that society and fraternal union has its archetype in Heaven; it inspires us with a zeal for peace and charity; it bids us see the divine cause and will in all that makes for oneness among men. The Trinity thus embodies a great social principle; and in the measure that we have faith in that practical principle, and an insight into its eternal value, our belief in the Trinity is an "inspiring" influence, something on which we can live. Apart from this, and as "mere assertion of doctrine," a mere enlightening of the mind, it is "the most deadening thing in the world."

He who wilfully rejects this practical truth "does his best to destroy the highest possibilities of life within himself," and in this sense will "perish everlastingly," by standing in the way of his own moral progress; not because he has refused the obedience of his mind to a Divine revelation from without. So far the "damnatory clauses" may be "rightly interpreted," however much the rough insistence on

these disagreeable consequences of obstinacy be deprecated.

No one who has read Newman's three essays on *Rationalism in Religion*, will have much difficulty in recognizing this teaching as emanating from the school of Erskine or Abbot, whose opinions are there canvassed.

The supposition of religious rationalism is that, doctrines should justify themselves to us, and fit into our thoughts harmoniously; that until they do so, and as long as they lie loose in the mind, three-cornered and uncomfortable, refusing to be knit up into the unity of our mental system, we cannot really be said to believe them or take them home, or to have an "insight" into them.

Faith would not lie, therefore, in the submission of the reason to belief in external realities only partially disclosed and imperfectly apprehended, but in the readiness of the mind to enter into intelligent agreement with what is revealed, to behold therein not merely a speculative truth, but a practical "inspiration of life." As another of the same school has put it: "The faith which yields a blind assent to mysterious dogma because propounded by ecclesiastical authority, is not the faith of Scripture at all; it is, in fact, fanaticism, and there is an unbelief which is preferable to it." Faith is therefore "not a

submission to that which is outside our comprehension."

But, according to the old-fashioned orthodoxy of Newman and Bishop Butler, this was just what faith meant. The same truth which under one aspect might be called a revelation, or manifestation, under another was necessarily a mystery. Belonging to a supernatural and Divine order of things, it refused to be adequately and properly expressed in human ideas and human lauguage. Such scant clothing could never fit it, or cover more than one side of it at a time; could never get round it and comprehend it. It was seen in twilight, unclearly, confusedly, yet nevertheless seen to some extent. And this all-imperfect knowledge of things Divine was considered valuable even for its own sake, as perfecting the understanding, quite apart from all moral improvement which might result from it. It was assumed that as God cares how we live, how we use our senses, our passions, our members, our will, and other faculties, so He also cares about the perfection of our intelligence, and about the life of thought for its own sake; and that as men should like to know about physical nature for the sake of knowing, and not merely in the interests of commerce, so they should like to know about God, so far as God might allow them, however imperfect that knowledge might

be. Although the truths of faith were believed to be objectively one, and linked together, yet to our gaze they were but as the projecting mountains of a submerged continent. It was a legitimate exercise of reverent reason to mark any indications of their hidden unity, to observe their angles of inclination, and to conjecture the point at which some of them might meet below, and run into one another. But to claim a right to see all, to refuse any truths that could not be brought into system with one another and with the body of our thought, to insist on completeness, was regarded as rationalism pure and simple. The Gospel was partly intelligible, partly unintelligible; on one side revelation and light, on the other mystery and darkness. Faith took it all; rationalism took the intelligible part alone.

The words and ordinances in which those Divine truths were couched might not be tampered with, just for the very reason that they did not, and could not, correspond exactly to the reality which they half hid and half disclosed. When we know the object presented under a metaphor, and the exact point of parity, we can safely change that metaphor for another; but when that object is known only through and in the metaphor, we do not know where the correspondence begins or ends, and so cannot afford to meddle. Thus revelation, being on the

whole an inadequate and analogous presentment of other-world truth, no man might trust himself to depart from the "form of words and the ordinances under which it comes to us, through which it is revealed to us, and *apart from which revelation does not exist, there being nothing else given to us by which to ascertain or enter into it.*" [1]

It is this last point which is so strangely ignored by the rationalizing Christian who sits in judgment on the adequacy of the ideas and expressions in which Divine truth has been wrapt, as though he had some direct insight into supernatural realities apart from revelation, and could compare the two forms of knowledge one with another.

Although Erskine in his *Internal Evidence* does not draw precisely the same practical lesson and inspiration from the Trinity as our writer, yet he is just as insistent on the general principle that it is only as an "inspiration of life" that it can have any claim on our credence. "What is the history of another world to me," he says, "unless it have some intelligible relation to my duties and happiness?"

One cannot but marvel at the frank philistinism of the supposition that knowledge, apart from its useful consequences, is nothing worth. Surely most of our astronomers and men of science would fall

[1] Newman, *Rationalism in Religion*, Essay I.

under the lash of this rebuke! But it is of other star-gazers that Mr. Erskine is thinking. "The abstract fact that there is a plurality in the unity of the Godhead really makes no address either to our understandings, or our feelings, or our consciences. But the obscurity of the doctrine, as far as moral purposes are concerned, is dispelled when it comes in such a form as this, *God so loved the world*," &c.; and again, "it is evident that this fact, taken by itself, cannot in the smallest degree tend to develop the Divine character; and therefore cannot make any moral impression on our minds," but "in the Bible it assumes quite a different shape; it is there subservient to the manifestation of the moral character of God." Again, he complains that in the creed doctrines "are not stated with any reference to their great object in the Bible—the regeneration of the human heart by the knowledge of the Divine character. They appear as detailed propositions indicating no moral cause and pointing to no moral effect. . . . They appear like links severed from the chain to which they belonged, and thus they lose all that evidence which arises from their consistency, and all that dignity which is connected with their high design." In the creeds "the doctrine stands as an isolated fact of a strange and unintelligible nature;" in the Bible, it "radiates to the heart, an

appeal of tenderness most intelligible in its nature and object, and most constraining in its influence." And still more frankly does he sweep aside creeds as the "systems of men who have engrafted the metaphysical subtleties of the schools upon the unperplexed statement of the word of God. In order to understand the facts of revelation, we must form a system to ourselves; *but if any subtilty of which the application is unintelligible to common-sense, or uninfluential on conduct, enters into our system, we may be sure that it is a wrong one.*"

In brief: God cannot possibly have had any end in revelation that we do not understand. The only end we can understand is man's use and service, to which we assume that all God's action must be subservient. Knowledge has no value in itself, but only so far as it leads to practical results in the way of virtuous conduct and comfortable living. Therefore, any pretended revelation, whose practical bearings are not manifest, may be rejected as spurious. God, by reason of His virtuous qualities, is a useful and improving acquaintance for man, but otherwise quite uninteresting. This disclosure of God's moral character is the central idea of revelation. All that fits in with this assumption is to be accepted: all else, rejected.

I do not think that those who hold with these

views could reasonably object to be classified with Mr. Erskine, as avowedly "rationalizers" of Christianity in the above sense; nor do I here contest their liberty thus to find a *modus vivendi* for themselves in these days of doubt and darkness; but what I do protest against is the tendency to muddle up issues so distinct as those which divide Butler and Newman from Erskine and Abbott, and, under the cloak of a more reverent faith and a deeper sense of mystery, to rebuke the rationalism of the compilers of the Athanasian Creed. It is in the attempt to make every doctrine intelligible, not merely to the human mind, but to the British Philistine of the nineteenth century, and in the crude endeavour to weave all doctrines into a coherent system by rejecting everything repugnant to some central assumption, that this school stands convicted of rationalism. The Church, says Newman, "has taught the existence of *mysteries* in religion, for such emphatically must truths ever be which are external to this world, and existing in eternity: whereas, this narrow-minded, jejune, officious and presumptuous human system teaches nothing but a *manifestation*, *i.e.*, a series of historical works conveying a representation of the moral character of God; and it dishonours our holy faith by the unmeaning reproach of its being metaphysical,

abstract, and the like—a reproach unmeaning and irreverent just as much as it would be on the other hand to call historical facts earthly or carnal."

This brings us to consider in detail some of these popular reproaches against the Athanasian Creed which are here adopted and reproduced.

The writer does not inveigh so vehemently as is usual against the "damnatory" clauses; for he has found, as we have noted, that they bear a rational sense, since he who denies the lesson in social charity taught by the perfect unison of the Three Divine Persons "does his best to destroy the highest possibilities of life within himself," and so far may be said "without doubt to perish everlastingly." Truly, this ethical platitude is expressed "in an almost savage manner, utterly misleading to ordinary minds;" and if the whole may be judged from a part, the suggestion of the Lambeth Conference that this creed should be re-translated was, at least, timely.

But if these clauses are taken in the natural sense they bear to "ordinary" minds, they are, and ought to be, absolutely intolerable to those who identify faith with "insight," and who regard a creed, not as the expression of an obedient resolve blindly to hold fast to the Word of God, but as the utterance of one's own subjective views of

Christianity so far as one finds them intelligible and inspiring. If when I recite the Athanasian Creed I am rehearsing my own private, self-formed, religious opinions; if I mean to say: This is the view of the matter which commends itself to my reason as coherent and perfectly intelligible, and which I find full of practical lessons and 'inspiration of life,'" and if I go on to add: "Whoever cannot see it as I see it, and feel about it as I feel about it, will most certainly go to Hell for ever," then I am indeed guilty at once of the most portentous untruthfulness and savage intolerance.

It is, however, the insensible extinction of the old orthodox conception of faith which makes these clauses unbearable to so many non-Catholics. The other creeds—the Nicene and the Apostles'—suppose them, but do not insert them, and therefore, although their contents are identical with those of the Athanasian Creed, they are more easily tolerated. Many can still recite the Nicene Creed as a catena of their private religious opinions, but no liberal and charitable mind will care to anathematize those whose opinions are different. For a man can no more determine what he shall understand and what he shall not understand, than he can determine his complexion or stature.

According to the Catholic view, faith is under-

stood to be a voluntary act by which the soul, conscious of the dimness and insufficiency of its own vision in the all-important affairs of eternity, resolves to cleave blindly to the word of God; just as in the "theological" virtues of hope and charity, it supplements its own defect and solitariness by appropriating the strength of God and the friendship of God. On this view it is necessary to say that the soul which separates itself from God, by rejecting the proffered aid of revelation, must "without doubt perish everlastingly;" seeing that God is the soul's life—its light, its strength, its love,—the two last, dependently on the first. "Without faith it is impossible to please God;" and "He that believeth not shall be condemned."

If beyond the natural life of man's soul, there is a supernatural, undreamt-of life, end, and happiness, there must also be a supernatural light, over and above the natural light of reason. And as he who holds not to the natural light of reason cannot possibly live the proper life of man, but becomes as the brutes that perish, so he who holds not by faith to the supernatural light of revelation, without doubt will walk in darkness and miss the supernatural life of grace and glory.

In the case of faith and hope alike a difficulty beyond all human wit and power is met by blind

reliance on God; a difficulty in the one case speculative, in the other practical. As by hope we believe that God will help, but we know not whence or how; so in faith we believe that God's word, however unintelligible and strange, will hereafter prove true in some way we cannot now imagine.

A mystery is comparable to a riddle in so far as in both cases we know that the words can be verified, yet we know not how. But in the riddle our obscurity is as to the precise idea intended by ambiguous language; in the mystery, as to the precise nature of the eternal and infinite reality imperfectly represented by a finite human idea. Again, the riddle is designed to hide the intended idea as carefully as verbal truth will permit; whereas the mystery is the result of an attempt to reveal as fully as possible in human ideas realities that are too big to fit into such narrow frames, except piecemeal. Finally, whereas in both cases, the solution gives rest and ease to the mind, in the case of the riddle it does so by showing the seeming wonderful fact to have been non-existent and delusive; in the case of the mystery it leaves the fact existing, but by supplementary knowledge destroys its wonderfulness. In the one case, what we thought true proves not true; in the other, it proves true, but less than the truth. Certain current

rationalizing explanations of ancient Christian dogmas proceeding from the school of Sabatier, by which the old words are retained, but a moral and platitudinous sense is slipt under them, really treat dogmas as riddles. We thought there was a mystery and we find a truism. God wants to impress upon us the importance of social unity, of oneness of mind and will reigning in a multitude of persons, and so He tells us that it is Divine, that it is found virtually in God Himself, that in God there are equivalently several persons and one nature. Thus the Trinity is merely a riddle which means that social unity is something very good and divine.

But let us be clear as to what a mystery means; and where the obscurity comes in. Our writer sends us to Nature to learn reverence; to Nature let us go. There we find facts, such as the law of attraction, that are perfectly clear and admit of the most precise statement and measurement, but the *why* and *how* of such facts is lost in absolute and impenetrable darkness. We do not consider it a necessary part of reverence to be hazy about the facts because the reasons are inscrutable. In revelation certain human ideas are conveyed to us in human language; which ideas very imperfectly represent eternal, superhuman realities. These ideas therefore cannot be treated like algebraic symbols whose value is

exactly determinable. Each is faulty in a way, but where the fault precisely lies we are not capable of seeing. That "there is one nature in God" would of itself convey to us that there was but one person in God. Hence we need to be told that there are three Persons in God which, alone, would imply that there were three natures. The two propositions contain and yet hide the truth, while their seeming incompatibility warns us that we are viewing the Eternal Reality through a cloud; that manifestation and mystery are here blended.

Or, again, we are told that there are souls which shall be eternally lost, and also, that God is infinitely more merciful than any creature whom He has made and endowed with mercy; infinitely juster than the fairest-minded man He has ever created and inspired with a sense of justice. Rationalism being unable to blend the two statements harmoniously, rejects one or the other; whereas Faith can well believe that God will save His word in all things, and yet all shall be well.[1] Similarly, we have a seeming

[1] "All these shall be damned to Hell without end, as Holy Church teacheth me to believe; and standing all this, methought it was impossible that all manner of thing should be well, as our Lord showed me in this time. And as to this I had no other answer, in showing of our Lord but this: 'That which is impossible to thee is not impossible to Me; I shall save My word in all things, and I shall make all things well.' And in this I was taught by the grace of God that I should steadfastly hold me fast in the faith *as*

discord in the existence of evil, the goodness of God, and the omnipotence of God. Rationalism connects what can be connected, and casts the rest; faith holds severally the disconnected truths, knowing that severed peaks may join at their hidden bases. When we translate form and colour into the language of music, or music into that of form and colour, we may expect many a seeming conflict of statement, and yet the truth is indistinctly touched and seen through a glass, darkly.

But of what use is such indistinct knowledge?

For those who believe that man's final bliss is to see God face to face, it is not strange that to see Him even dimly by faith should be regarded as a privilege for an intelligent creature. There are some things worth knowing even imperfectly, for the sake of knowledge: perhaps God is one of them? But if we must have serviceable results in the form of virtue, "does not the notion of a mystery," asks Newman, "lead to awe and wonder? and are not these moral impressions?" Is it no moral gain to be delivered from the pettiness and

I had before understood. And *therewith* that I should stand and firmly believe that all manner of things shall be well as our Lord showed me in the same time. For this is the great deed that our Lord God shall do; in which deed He shall save His word in all things, and He shall make well all that is not well." (Revelations of Mother Julian of Norwich, chap. 32.)

"intellectual provincialism" of the rationalist; to gain were it but the briefest glimpse of a world wider than ours; of interests to which even the interests of this very important planet of ours may be secondary; may be possibly subordinate?

Now, seeing that these human ideas underlying the original words of revelation, and hiding, no less than revealing eternal and ineffable truths, are the only image or reflection we as yet possess of the supernatural world; and that we are not in a position to compare them with the original realities so as to readjust them or substitute others more aptly expressive; seeing also that God has given us these human ideas clothed in human language, and that language is mutable and uncertain, it is plainly a matter of sovereign importance that the original sense underlying the words of revelation should be secured in every possible way. It is in the fulfilment of this duty of reverence to the precious deposit of the Divine word that the Church has incurred the charge of irreverence and rationalism at the hands of hasty and ill-advised thinkers. It is no irreverence to be as exact as possible in determining the human ideas, the human sense, intended in the original words of revelation. It would be irreverence to attempt crudely to reconcile those ideas one with another, to treat them as precise algebraic symbols

and to work with them accordingly. It would be irreverence to reject them because irreconcilable.

Now, to confine ourselves, for brevity's sake, to the Trinity, the Athanasian Creed says not one word beyond what is contained in our writer's confession of Trinity of Persons and Unity of God. It simply determines as exactly as possible what are the precise human ideas intended by the human words in which the doctrine was conveyed; and this, against those heretics who either failed to interpret those words aright, or else, rationalizing upon the true ideas, derived conclusions which were invalid and unwarranted as proceeding from necessarily ambiguous and inexact premises, whose terms stand, not for mental abstractions, mathematical or metaphysical, but for concrete eternal realities. Were there, in this creed, any attempt to explain away the difficulty of these seemingly conflicting ideas, to show how three persons existed or must exist in one nature, to make the mystery "intelligible" and "inspiring;" to fit it harmoniously into the philosophic system of the modern latitudinarian, then indeed it would be an intolerable piece of rationalism. But having asserted, "One God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity;" the creed goes on to reiterate that statement in about a dozen different forms with the tiresome insistence of a legal

document anxious to guard against any merely verbal ambiguity. There is no advance in *idea* until we come to an assertion of the personal relations, Father, Son, and Spirit, where again we have nothing that is not a mere precision of language. What the hazy, half-agnostic mind really shrinks from is this very reiteration and repetition which gives the impression of committing oneself deeper and deeper to one knows not what, while all the time one has not advanced a single step. By the use of brackets the first sixteen or twenty verses might be put into five lines; while a more detailed enumeration of the attributes of Deity might extend the document indefinitely in mere bulk without introducing any more dogma than is contained in one verse.

One would have thought, however, that "anthropomorphic" would be about the last charge to bring against a deliberate and reiterated assertion of the unlikeness of God to man; of threeness in person with oneness in nature; of a Being uncreated, eternal, incomprehensible, omnipotent; of Fatherhood without priority, of Sonship without dependence. But by anthropomorphism our writer seems rather to mean that the compiler of the creed professes to have seen God face to face and to have attempted to describe his vision "in the same sort

of way as a picture or a bit of scenery." But this charge of anthropomorphism really falls upon God, who has translated Eternal Truths into imperfect human ideas; not upon the Church, whose definitions but safeguard those ideas from being lost through the ambiguity and changeableness of human language. Does the objector's own confession of "Trinity of Persons and Unity of God" escape the charge any more than the Creed of Athanasius, which says not one word more? Consistently, his exceeding reverence for the mystery ought to make him refrain altogether from saying what the "sublime truths" which he believes really are.

Again, it is an eminently "popular" remark to speak of this creed as embodied in "the terms of an obsolete philosophy." We feel it was only a sense of chronology that saved us from a diatribe on "the metaphysical subtilties of the scholastics." As the creed must be expressed in some language or other, so also in the terms of some philosophy or other; for we cannot speak without implying some philosophy, even as we must imply some grammar, though we may never have heard of philosophy or grammar. What philosophy then should we wish the Church to use if not that in which those men to whom the oracles were first delivered thought—the crude, simple realism of the unsophisticated? Would he

translate the Trinity into the ideas of Kant or Hume or Hegel? What is this philosophy, so congenial, so perspicuous to the subtle-minded British public? Is it utilitarianism? Is it rationalism?

When, however, we repudiate "rationalism" in religion, we do not mean that reasoning has no legitimate play in regard to truths of faith and morals, and may not in some rare cases start from revealed premises to draw conclusions of *theological* certainty. But it is precisely on account of the dangers incident to such "rationalizing" that we need a teaching Church. If the ideas in which eternal realities have been expressed to us were "proper" ideas, in no way analogous or defective, or if we could know exactly where their limitation began and ended, we then might deal with them as with mere logical symbols and regard our conclusions as demonstrated certainties. We then should not need a Church to guide the evolution of doctrine any more than we do to guide the advance of mathematical science. God does not gratuitously intervene with natural causes when they suffice. But it is just because the language of Scripture and traditional dogma is not scientific and abstract, but natural and concrete; and because the underlying ideas are not adequate to what they image, but defective and ill-fitting, that we need a providential

determination of points of development which reason alone cannot determine.

There is a good deal to be got out of a metaphor like *Tu es Petrus*, but it needs the sense of the Church to determine how much or how little. If a rock typifies firmness and strength, it also stands for hardness and inelasticity; it is a source of danger as well as of safety. We cannot reason from a metaphor till its precise point of similarity is otherwise determined. Every finite idea as representative of God, if not metaphorical, is too short-fitting for mere reason to get safe results out of, and such results are often felt to be at variance with the sense of the Church, prior to any dogmatic decision.

Obviously the same caution is needed when logic is applied to moral and ascetical principles, though for a slightly different reason. For here the conclusions, being practical and not speculative, have to be applied to concrete instances of whose innumerable conditions only a very few can be considered in the abstract; just as a physician can prescribe *à priori* for one or other ailment of a patient known to him only by hearsay, but when he comes to know the other complications and the whole constitution and circumstances of the said patient, he has to abandon his reasoning and trust to a certain sagacity of instinct or "illative sense," to which no doubt the

reasoning habit is both subservient and supplementary, but for which it is no substitute.

Reasoning in the abstract, for conditions never found separate and pure in the concrete, must, when the merely hypothetical nature of these scientific conclusions is overlooked, inevitably lead to laxity in moral theology where the aim is rightly to minimize in the interest of freedom; and to rigorism in asceticism, where the aim to "maximize" in the interest of greater perfection. But under the supervision and guidance of the Church, and checked by the Christian and healthy instincts of the general and of the individual conscience, and held in abeyance to a certain intuitive sagacity that no abstract inference should stand against, this mild and cautious application of logic to moral matters acts as a valuable corrective to personal idiosyncrasy and fanaticism, and keeps imagination from usurping the place of reason and faith. Similarly, a conclusion drawn even with perfect logical accuracy from the ideas under which God has presented eternal truths to us, needs to be confirmed by the sense of the Church in so far as those ideas are analogous and not "proper."

But this is a very different kind of rationalism from that advocated, unconsciously it may be, by the school for which our writer acts as spokesman. It

is supplemental and not fundamental; whereas to assume that truth is of no value except for its practical and moral consequences; that God is indifferent to the perfection of our intelligence and higher life, save so far as it bears upon the perfection of our other faculties; that revelation can have no end but to exhibit God to us as the pattern and reward of morality; that whatever has no bearing on this obvious and unmysterious end, or no intelligible bearing, may be rejected as no part of revelation,—this is not merely rationalism, pure and simple, which were compatible with a belief in the value of truth for its own sake, but rationalism complicated with an utilitarianism that savours of Gath and Askelon.

Jan. 1899.

VI.

SABATIER ON THE VITALITY OF DOGMAS.

PROFESSOR SABATIER'S short study on the *Vitality of Christian Dogmas* opens up many questions of interest which it would be impossible to discuss within the narrow limits at our disposal. We must content ourselves, therefore, with a brief exposition of his teaching, followed by a few strictures chiefly by way of dissent. With Dean Freemantle's Preface to the English translation we need not concern ourselves, beyond observing that he finds himself in fullest sympathy with M. Sabatier's theology, and invokes three Anglican Bishops in support of the view that faith is "not a submission to that which is outside our apprehension," or as the Bishop of Ballarat puts it: "The faith which yields a blind assent to mysterious dogmas because propounded by ecclesiastical authority, is not the faith of Scripture at all; it is, in fact, fanaticism, and there is an unbelief which is preferable to it." What is most noteworthy and admirable in M. Sabatier's study is the consistency of his Protestantism and the clear-

ness with which he deduces it from the principles of the Reformation—principles necessarily felt rather than understood at the time, and needing the reflection and analysis of three centuries to sever them from the Catholic soil that was dragged away with their roots and to present them clean and pure as they appear in the pages of this perfect little exposition.

It would perhaps have been well had he given us a definition of some of the principal terms in use, especially of "dogma" and "religion" and "Christianity." We fancy that the second has been defined some hundreds of different ways within the range of English literature, and with such variety as to defy any sanguine attempt to find a common element or substratum. But no doubt those pupils whom M. Sabatier addresses primarily are familiar with his terminology, nor is it difficult for *nous autres* to gather it from his pages by a process of comparison.

Dogmas are not dead, unchangeable things, but living and changeable; they not only can change, but they must of necessity change; by recognizing and aiding this necessity, not by ignoring or opposing it, will the theologian save dogmatic Christianity. Such is the argument. The whole book is a defence of dogmatic religion against "a kind of Christian

positivism which asks for a religion without dogmas, and consequently without worship."

By a dogma M. Sabatier understands the form of words in which some point of religious belief is embodied, as distinct from the belief itself or the meaning of those words. Thus[1] he says: "We have kept, and still repeat, the dogmas of early times; but we pour into them unconsciously a new meaning. The terms do not change, but the ideas and their interpretation are renewed;" and he instances the Trinity, the Divinity of Christ, inspiration, miracles, which (he says) we understand "differently from our fathers." Dogma, though it safeguards religion, does not effectively produce religion, but is produced by religion; just as language fixes and preserves thought, makes it communicable, and is the condition of its development, and yet does not produce thought, but rather is produced by thought. You cannot have thought without language; you cannot have religion without dogma. Experience proves both statements alike. We can criticize the language without destroying the thought; we can criticize dogma without hurting religion in any way.

What, then, is religion? Not "a metaphysical theory, a branch of erudition." "In life the awakening of feeling always precedes that of thought. And

[1] P. 43.

so religion exists as emotion or sentiment, or vital instinct, before it is transformed either into intellectual notions or into rites." Religion, however, is not exactly this "primary and inner emotion," which is rather its soul or quickening principle; but the emotion, together with the ideas and rites into which it translates itself. These latter are its mutable and corruptible body; always taking in new matter and casting off old: while body and soul together (that is, dogma and emotion) constitute religion. Although feeling or emotion precedes the theory or idea in which it endeavours to formulate its object; yet it is itself preceded and excited by some vague kind of apprehension of that same object; whether the emotion be desire of an object not yet attained, or satisfaction excited by the presence of an object. Thus M. Sabatier speaks of "the *objects* of religious consciousness," that is, we may suppose, the realities whose vague and indistinct apprehension stirs the religious emotion in our soul. When man in the presence of the great spectacles of nature realizes his dependence on some close mysterious power, he trembles with fear and hope. "This tremor is the primary religious emotion," and "implies a certain relation between the subject which is conscious of it and the object which caused it." We may presume, though it is not explicitly stated, that the

object of these satisfactions, hopes, longings, and fears which constitute religious emotion, is what is expressed commonly under the dogmatic conception called "God." When a man begins to reflect on his religious emotion and to formulate and analyze the object which gave birth to it, this attempted intellectual statement is a dogma. Thus, "when once the man's thought is awakened," and he tries to explain and express to himself the vague object of his "tremor," "he will necessarily translate this relation into an intellectual statement," he "will cry out, 'God is great,' marking, in so doing, the infinite disproportion which exists between his own being and the universal Being which causes him to tremble."

Between religious emotion on the one hand, and dogmatic formulas on the other, there are the intellectual and imaginative forms in which the mind attempts to present the object of religious emotion to itself. These attempts are always and necessarily inadequate, provisional, and variable with the variations of the believer's culture and mental development: "God, while revealing Himself to our hearts, yet remains infinitely superior to all the conceptions of our mind;" "our religious life is independent of every image and theory." In other words, just as the spirit of chivalry took form and embodied itself

in the legends of Arthur and his knights; or as human love, itself essentially the same, has expressed itself in a thousand different dreams and romances characterized by the temper and education of the dreamer; so the religious sentiment, substantially alike in all men, ever weaves for itself some tale which shall all too feebly express the nature of that unknown visitant of the human heart whose knockings stir us with such strange fears and hopes, joys and regrets.

Still, we must not look on such a theory of God, on such a history of God's dealings as we possess in the Creed, as a pure romance or fairy-tale. It has the value of an allegory falling immeasurably short of the truth it would utter. Nay, it is in some sense a divinely inspired allegory, or a revelation; for God, "in entering into contact with the soul, has made it go through a certain religious experience out of which, by means of reflection, dogmas have issued." In the soul of Christ and the prophets and apostles, God causes some strong and unusual spiritual commotion which they of their own ingenuity, consciously or unconsciously, seek to utter and embody in allegories, but "since these doctrines and formulas could be, and were in fact, conceived by man's intellect, He left to man the care of elaborating them."

Dogma being then but the language of faith or religion (for faith is but another name for this spiritual sentiment), it lives, develops, and dies just as language does. To determine the meaning of a word fully, we must not consult the dictionary, but usage; we must observe it in life and action, not as fixed or petrified by definition.

Like language, dogma is modified by *desuetude*, by *intussusception*, by *neology*. By *desuetude*, according as certain images and theories cease to explain or symbolize the object of religious sentiment, and so the terms and propositions answering to them drop out of use. Thus we [Protestants] have ceased to believe in personal demons and in possession; and therefore all the terminology connected with that (at one time serviceable) mode of conceiving things has vanished. We no more believe our spiritual adversary to be a personal being, a fallen angel, than we believe him to be a roaring lion. The former belief is now accepted as a picture, as the latter always was. By *intussusception*, according as the meaning of a term is gradually altered till perhaps not an element of its original significance remains; *e.g.*, the word "clerk" now means a writer: it first meant one chosen by lot. So in dogma, "Christ is God" once meant that all things were created by the son of a Nazarene virgin; now Dean

Freemantle uses the words "as implying our Lord's supremacy, as one with a God who is essentially a God of righteousness and of love, over our consciences, and over the whole range of the moral world;" in other words, in the sense that as righteousness is supreme over our conscience, so the great pattern of righteousness, Christ, exercises a certain supremacy over our conscience, and may so far be called God. Finally, dogma is modified by a sort of *neology*, as when new theories and images are conjured up and new terms fabricated, such as "justification by faith," or "universal priesthood." The vitality of a dogmatic creed is therefore the vitality of a language, some words dying, others being born, others slowly changing their sense till change ends in death.

To discard dogma in the interests of religion would be like discarding language in the interests of thought. The true theologian will aid and guide the natural process of evolution, and will not deny or oppose it. His task lies in "applying criticism to the old dogmas; in disengaging their vital principle; in preparing for this principle a new expression." He has "to set free their living principle from the decaying form in which it is enclosed, and to prepare for it new forms in harmony with modern culture:" not "to formulate new dogmas,"

but "to render easy and free from danger the passage, which is always critical, between old and new ideas;" in fact, he has especially to co-operate with the process of "intussusception," to keep to "the form of sound words," while quietly slipping new meanings under them, and explaining them away as long as they will possibly admit of it, and when this gets too difficult he may noiselessly introduce new terminology and suffer the old to retire into its well-earned rest. He will recognize that when the Reformers cast aside scholasticism, which the Roman Church had worked into the essential tissue of her form of Christianity, they in principle rejected the authoritative claims of every other human clothing of the religious sentiment of Christ; not merely what it received from Greek philosophy and from Roman jurisprudence in the early Church, but even that Hebraic garb in which Christ presented it to us, Himself a Hebrew, heir to the language, tradition, and religion of that race, with "its notion of justice, its metaphysical notion of God, its Messianic ideas, its apocalyptical hopes." All this *fecula* of Hebraism, of Greco-Romanism, of Scholasticism, must be sundered from the vital germ, from the religious emotions and inward experiences of Christ of which they are but the contingent language and expression.

Such is M. Sabatier's position—clear, precise, altogether understandable. It is Protestantism worked out ruthlessly to its logical conclusion, and severed from all admixture of alloy; and so far it is worthy of respect, and worthy of careful study by those who often fail in their controversy with Protestants from sheer inability to conceive a position so unlike their own. As soon as faith is asserted to be an internal sentiment, and not to be an assent to Divine mysteries revealed, in some way, from without; as soon as revelation is declared to be merely a stirring up of feeling, and not an instruction of the mind, this is the conclusion we must come to—Christianity is a certain sensation or emotion, which tends to awake conceptions, theories, and images in the mind which have no absolute objective value whatever.

Against all this, Catholic Christianity regards revelation as a supernatural instruction of the mind, in which the forms and images which constitute what might be called the "language" of the mind in question, are used by God (either directly or through some created agency) to express truths not known before, or not known in the same way. It is in all respects similar to the informing of one mind by another. However the speaker may understand the matter, whatever be his own language (mental or

oral), he must use the language of the hearer and make the best of it as a vehicle for his information.

Faith, as Catholics conceive it, is not religious emotion nor a sentiment of spiritual security and comfort, but a voluntary assent of the mind to the information conveyed to it by revelation from another. Dogma, moreover, is the spoken or written equivalent of that mental language in which Christ and His Church (divinely assisted) have embodied the truths of revelation. Finally, religion is not a divinely originated blind emotion clothing itself spontaneously in theories and images of merely human creation, but inversely it is the body of divinely taught truths slowly, but never adequately, penetrating and shaping the mind which holds to it, fructifying in the will, and clothing itself with good desires and good actions.

It is in the clearness of its opposition to Catholic conceptions that M. Sabatier's sketch of the Protestant standpoint is so helpful and satisfactory.

Had man been left alone, without the aid of supernatural revelation, things would have been very much as M. Sabatier describes them. Conscience, with its sense of right and wrong, and the attendant emotions of peace and remorse, hope and fear, would necessarily have involved some vague apprehension of the object of the religious sentiment,

namely, of the Living Will that seems to press on ours as if it would dominate it; and the awakening mind would have essayed to present that object to itself, to theorize about it, and to speak of it under symbols, parables, and metaphors which, in the childhood of races, when fact and fancy are so easily interchanged, would soon have hardened into history and dogma. At all times reason and imagination would have worked to produce some theory or story whereby to satisfy and explain the religious emotion; but in every stage of culture and mental progress, theory would have mingled false with true, and symbolism would have quickly degenerated into mythology. Nor is this mere hypothesis; since the history of natural religions and their evolution abundantly confirms it. It was to obviate this double infirmity of our mind that God gave us an external revelation, and was made Man. Instead of leaving our reason slowly and uncertainly to elaborate its own theory of the Divinity, He supplied the need from without, He taught us, all at once, as far as our language would then allow, all and more than reason could have ever known. Instead of leaving us to satisfy our imagination by a self-devised symbolism of Divine mysteries, and by parables ever prone to become myths, He devised for us the economy of the Incarnation, and in the life of the

God-Man and of His precursors and followers, uttered Eternal Truth and Love as far as it could be uttered in the enacted language of human life; thus supplying by the sacred history of the Old and New Dispensation the need which mythology supplied in the man-begotten religions of the pagan world.

That which is revealed to us in these doctrines and facts may perhaps be called the "object of the religious sentiment," *sc.*, that Mind and Will whose presence is indistinctly felt in every movement of conscience. But supernatural revelation does not merely explain and satisfy our natural spiritual aspirations, but goes far beyond them and leaves them ever lagging behind. All our dogmas and mysteries are directly or indirectly manifestations of God's nature and will; but in substance, as in origin, they are widely different from the self-formed conceptions and symbols of the unassisted mind.

So far as the Christian revelation is embedded in facts, in the language of Divine deeds, in the sacred history of the life of Christ and His Church, there is no room for modification or re-utterance. That is God's language; and, like the language of creation, it is the same for all men in all ages, however they interpret or misinterpret it. Of course this very history is known mostly, not by experiment, but by record; and the record itself, even when inspired, is

in human language, which needs interpretation before we are put *en rapport* with facts. It is on the authority of sacred records that we believe that Christ "ascended into Heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father." But we interpret the first part of the statement as recording a literal fact; and the second as a metaphorical expression of supernatural truth:[1] the first, as a really enacted symbolism of Christ's exaltation; the second, as a merely verbal symbolism of the same. M. Sabatier thinks that because in both cases the truth symbolized is the important point, it is quite unnecessary to believe that in the former case the symbolism was real and objective; and similarly he would treat the record of the miraculous Birth of Christ and of His Resurrection. We, however, believe not merely in the truths signified by sacred history, but in the correspondence between record and fact; in real as well as verbal symbolism.

But when we come to what is more strictly dogma or doctrine, to the revelation of what are called mysteries because they defy adequate expression in any form of human thought and language,

[1] "By the words, 'Sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty,' I do not mean that God the Father has hands, for He is a Spirit; but I mean that Christ as God is equal to the Father, and as Man is in the highest place in Heaven." (*Penny Catechism*, q. 70.)

it is important to observe the close parallel there is between philosophy and language. As it is natural to all men to speak, and as there are certain general laws common to all languages, especially in their earlier stages; so all men incline to put their thoughts in order, to group their conceptions into categories, to unify and simplify their knowledge; and the broad lines of procedure are always much the same, especially in elementary stages of philosophy. As we can say nothing without language, so neither can we think the simplest thought without implying some philosophy, some particular variety of mind-language by which the primitive and necessary laws of thinking are supplemented and determined by our own industry. So far as there is a contingent and changeable element superadded to what is fixed by nature, there may be many philosophies, as there are many languages, all more or less apt to express the same facts and truths in their own way. There are, no doubt, many possible unifications and groupings of ideas of which one is on the whole as good as another; and even were we to deny this, who would dare say of any known philosophy that it was absolute and final? *De facto* this variety exists, nor does it seem to be either a pre-requisite or a result of revelation to provide the race with what perhaps is not possible or necessary

in this respect, namely, an absolute and perfect philosophy.

But according to M. Sabatier, the Catholic religion has committed herself irretrievably to scholasticism, to Alexandrine platonism, to the pandects of Justinian, and even to the theosophic conceptions of the Hebraic mind and language in which Christ clothed His religious sentiments. She has taken fundamental ideas and principles from these philosophies, and has exalted them into dogmas, failing to distinguish the emotional substance of religion from its intellectual involucre, which is as the husk to the kernel.

That the Church has expressed her dogmas in the terms of Plato or Aristotle, in no way implies that she regards theirs as the only philosophies or as the best; no more than her use of the Latin tongue means that she holds it to be the only or the best language. When the Divine Spirit instructs the mind of prophet or apostle by revelation, It does not begin by teaching him a new language or a new philosophy, but taking what It finds to hand, It gives utterance thereby to the truth or mystery as adequately as that medium of expression will permit. So it was with the deposit of faith bequeathed to us by the Apostles; the language, philosophy, science, and imagery was their own, but

the truth and its translation into that language and philosophy was from God. So, with the subsequent expression of the Church's mind, in days when all men spoke and thought with Aristotle, she refuted heresy in the same language in which it was formulated. If, using the philosophy of the schools, heterodoxy denied that the soul was the substantial form of the human body, the Church, answering in the same language, asserted that it was. And indeed if we would understand her mind, or the mind of the apostles and prophets, even of Christ Himself, we must know how to speak and to think with them. We must study the language they spoke and the philosophy it involved.

Nor is this to ask an impossibility, as Dean Freemantle supposes when he approvingly echoes M. Sabatier's axiomatic epigram: "We can no more think in Greek than we can speak Greek." No more indeed, but just as much. We can speak Greek and we can think in Greek. Men still study the philosophy of Greece, nor do we question their ability to understand it. The Church treasures the original mind-forms and language in which Divine truth has been committed to her, as it were the perishable earthen vessel in which a priceless gift is contained. She does not deny that, were the revelation given to-day, the language and form

might be different, nor that, clothed in Chinese language and conceptions, the very same Divine truths would seem strangely unlike themselves; but she holds to that form which alone has been divinely guaranteed, the "form of sound words" which she pores over and ponders from century to century.

And when she embodies the results of her ponderings in the forms and phrases of the School, she wisely adopts a philosophy little removed from the first spontaneous efforts of the mind towards unity, and which, like the dead Latin tongue, has a certain catholicity, eternity, and immutability that make it a suitable medium of utterance for an international religion. And as she requires her ecclesiastics to understand the language of her liturgy, so she demands that they shall be proficient in the philosophy of her definitions.

In all this she in no way asserts that her adopted language is the best or only language. When she approves the Vulgate Bible, she does not deny that other translations may be better, but she does not guarantee them as free from error. When she utters her dogmas in the phrases of the School, she does not forbid us to translate them into other forms, but she will not guarantee the translation. Those who venture upon such translations, do so at their own peril.

Seeing, therefore, that the Church looks on the Christian revelation as a body of truths delivered once and for all to the Apostles, and that she carefully treasures the all-but dead philosophy and language in which it was clothed, and keeps them living for no other end, it is plain that we can acknowledge no such "vitality of dogma" as M. Sabatier insists on. What we have received as of faith that we hold to for ever, and as far as possible in the same form. Yet, unlike those Christians who appeal from the living Church to the dead, or who fix some arbitrary date at which all dogmatic evolution was arrested, we believe that, in the mind of the Church collectively, the conception of the whole body of revealed truth grows in fulness and distinctness as she ponders it in her heart; that the relations of part with part stand out more clearly; that new consequences and applications are observed; while the denials of heretics ever call for modifications of expression by which an increasing exactitude is secured. This is exactly the kind of vitality of dogma which Vincent of Lerins contends for in his *Commonitorium* when he distinguishes *profectus fidei* from *permutatio*, and illustrates by the growth of a boy to manhood;[1] but it is absolutely different from the vitality of which M. Sabatier

[1] C. xxiii. al. xxviii.

speaks. Indeed, how could it be otherwise if, according to the latter, Christian dogma is but the hypothetical theory and imagery in which the religious emotion of Christ clothed itself; while, according to the former, it is the divinely-chosen expression of those truths and eternal realities on which the eye of Christ rested. In the one supposition He came solely to move the feelings, careless of how the intellect might explain the emotion to itself; in the other, He came to enlighten the intellect by truth, no less than to sanctify the will by charity. Protestantism holds fast to its maxim that God does not care about the perfection of our highest faculty; He does not care what we think or believe, so long as we mean well. To us, Christ is also the Truth and the Light. He who was with God from the beginning, who was in the bosom of the Father, declared the Father to man; He declared Him in the forms of human thought, in the words of human language, but with a Divine skill of expression which He has bequeathed to His Church to the end of time.

To those who might tender to him the reproach, "They have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid Him," M. Sabatier replies with a confident *Resurrexit*, "He is not here, He is risen; why seek the living among the dead?" He is not to

be found wrapped in the cerements and grave-clothes of dogmatic statement, not in any image or theory whatever. These are but mutable trappings, which the conception of Christ outgrows and flings aside from time to time, to clothe itself in freer and ampler garments. Stripped even of the last shred of historic or dogmatic belief, Christianity survives intact in its essence, which consists in that supreme access of religious sentiment which was the originating impulse of all that is best in the religion of Christ. For our own part, if this be all, we should feel constrained to be more frank with the mourner and to say, "His disciples have come and stolen Him away"—well-intentioned, no doubt, in their zeal for His reputation; but surely mistaken in their judgment and weak in their faith.

June, 1898

VII.

AUTHORITY AND EVOLUTION, THE LIFE OF CATHOLIC DOGMA.

This work of P. de la Barre's[1] is valuable as crystallizing and bringing into system most of the tentative ideas on the subject of evolution in dogma which have been put forward of late by Catholic theologians in the wake of Newman. The author rightly protests against the common innuendo of adverse critics, that this doctrine of development has sprung suddenly into existence to meet the awkward revelations of history touching the contrast between the dogmatic teaching of early and modern Catholicism. Vincent of Lerins is well quoted amongst others, as the most explicit exponent in ancient times of the doctrine of development; for he too is perhaps more generally notorious for his vehement assertion of the conservative principle—seemingly contrary, but really complementary—*quod semper*,

[1] *La Vie du Dogme, Authorité—Evolution.* Par le R. P. de la Barre, S.J. Paris: Lethielleux, 1898.

quod ubique, quod ab omnibus. It is only the popularity of evolutionism in our day that makes it more important to insist upon this ancient aspect of theology, and ensures it a better chance of being understood. At other times the principle of immobility and conservation needed emphasis against the unrestrained 'progressivism' of heresy refusing the guidance of those "directive ideas" which make a development legitimate, and which secure identity amid diversity, unity of plan together with expansion of parts. But now that the heterodox historians of dogma are casting the "*quod semper*" principle in her teeth, the Church turns the pages of the *Commonitorium*, and lays an emphatic finger on c. xiii. "Let the religion of souls follow the method of bodies, which, though in the course of years they evolve and unfold their several parts, yet withal abide what they were;" and she claims that, while in substance her doctrine remains unchanged, yet in the lapse of centuries its parts and members have been brought out into clearer recognition, and have been more accurately defined.

P. de la Barre's aim is to show how these principles of authority and evolution are mutually complementary in the determination of Catholic dogma.

Speaking widely, the Protestant conception of

religion is individualist; while the Catholic, which is social and collective, finds itself in sympathy rather with Comte than with Rosseau. Comte, J. de Maistre, de Bonald, and Lamennais are here adduced as in one way or another upholding the Catholic notion of a "society entrusted with the transmission of a doctrine, with the safe-guarding and promulgation of a certain deposit." They all recognize that the power, therefore the duty, of independent thought is far rarer than individualist philosophy imagines, and that the vast majority of men do, and ought to, rule their minds by a certain floating body of public doctrine in which they have a natural faith. This body of doctrine is slowly formed, shaped, modified, corrected, and increased by the accumulated labours of the few independent thinkers; and thus there is provided for the multitude a norm of belief which, if fallible, is practically sufficient for each age and country. The idea that each man can and ought to think independently on all subjects, has no basis in fact, and leads in practice to intellectual and every other kind of anarchy. Man is a social being in respect to the formation of his mind, no less than in regard to his general development. His mind as well as his body is sterilized by solitude.

Holding society to be altogether natural, and

by no means artificial, Comte rightly seeks in its growth for the two principles which are involved in every kind of vitality—a principle of permanence and sameness, and a principle of movement and diversity. It is in authority that this principle of stability is found, whereby the movements of the organism are controlled into agreement with the fundamental idea or plan which its growth develops; and thus, sameness of end and design prevails, together with extension and diversity of parts.

So far as we confine our attention to society considered as a school for the mind, this governing authority, this body of publicly approved belief, may find voice in many ways. With de Maistre, it is the Pope of Rome who gathers up and gives utterance to the collective sentiment of the faithful in matters of religious doctrine. Comte seemed inclined later in life to arrogate to himself a quasi-papal function in regard to positivism. De Bonald is so convinced of the incompetence of individual reason that he does not allow that even its accumulated observations and reflections could ever slowly create a public deposit of religious doctrine, but attributes this latter to primitive teaching handed down from father to son, and somewhat damaged in the process. Lamennais, however, credits humanity, taken collectively, with

a certain infallibility in guarding the deposit of primitive religion. What all religions agree in, he holds to be true. Christianity supplements and develops this original and universal creed, but in no way sets it aside. It, like every other religion, springs from the common trunk; and is but the most fully developed branch of that tree.

Integrating these scattered truths, these broken lights, which are emphasized, if at times caricatured, in recent philosophies, P. de la Barre finds the transmission of moral, religious, and philosophical ideas determined, first by authority, or the influence of the social body, however vested; and then, by the inherent expansiveness of the idea itself.

The members of society being locally and externally separate, some authority is needed to unite them and to bring their minds into concord. On this need Comte and de Maistre insist. De Bonald supplements their theory by insisting on the need of tradition, whereby the collective mind of the past is brought to bear upon that of the present. Obviously enough, both these requirements are met by the Papacy, which gives voice to the collective mind of the present Church built upon the past, and so brings the social influence of the whole Christian body, from the beginning, to bear upon

the mind of the individual and to shape its religious beliefs.

But the Church being a supernatural religious society, an element enters in, of which philosophy takes no account. It has acquired its deposit of divine truth by revelation, not by human investigation and reflection; it preserves that deposit and interprets it, through human means indeed, but supplemented by divine assistance ensuring ultimate infallibility. Even apart from such intervention, the security of guidance offered by such an ancient, world-wide, close-knit organism would be considerable—though it may be fairly held that it is in the very creation and continuance of this religious republic that the hand of God is most felt and the promise of assistance fulfilled. Comte had the idea —or rather borrowed it—but Christ alone effected it.

To the Protestant or rationalist—who denies the Church's divine authority, who regards it with horror as a force extrinsic to the faithful, crushing their minds, and not simply as their own collective mind uttered for them—a dogma is but a human product. To the orthodox or Bible Protestant, Scripture alone is God's word, while the creeds that are drawn from it are man's devices—useful it may be, but not infallible. To the rationalist Protestant, even Scripture is but a provisional attempt to give

symbolic utterance to the felt but unknown object of our religious instinct. No utterance of divine truth, in or out of the Bible, is permanent or final. Each age needs quietly to modify the symbolism of the preceding, to the better expression of its own religious emotions and aspirations. But to the Catholic, the language and symbolism in which Christ clothed His revelation was divinely chosen and approved, not as equating our mind to what necessarily transcends its exact apprehension and expression, but as conveying as much of the truths of eternity as we are capable of receiving in our present embryonic state of intellectual development. Every letter of that deposit is therefore treasured. But since the value of words changes and the symbolism of one nation differs from that of another, it is needful to know precisely what were the mental ideas conveyed by the words of revelation to its first hearers. However much those mental ideas fall short of the ineffable realities they represent; yet the faltering words in which they are conveyed to us are still more defective, ill-fitting, ambiguous. The Church's labour is not only to preserve these words, but to explain them, to keep their original sense, to save them from being twisted and perverted.

Most of her dogma is directed to this task of

fencing round revealed truths from the innumerable misunderstandings to which they are exposed. The whole of the Athanasian Creed is occupied with safeguarding the single idea conveyed in the formula of Baptism. Her doctrine of transubstantiation explains the precise sense of: "This is My body." Heretics, by their negations, have built up a large part of our dogma, which, when they are forgotten, may be forgotten too—that part namely which consists of verbal rather than real definitions, which reasserts ancient conceptions to the exclusion of false developments and interpretations, rather than asserts any new aspect or extension of a revealed truth; which consists of conservative rather than of progressive utterances.

Thus the Catholic regards the Church's final expression of truth, which we call dogma, as being of divine authority—differing from the Scriptural expression only in this, that in revelation the language, though human, is divinely chosen and inspired; in dogma it is chosen by human labour and only guaranteed from error through the intervention of Providence acting, not miraculously, but according to established laws.

The first part of the present work vindicates for the Church this divine doctrinal authority. It insists on the conception of the Church as a living social

organism, in union with which the individual is put *en rapport* with the animating Spirit, and made partaker of the common mind of Christianity, past and present. Then, having settled the question of the Church's right to teach and to preserve the original deposit, the author goes on to the more difficult point touching the nature of this conservative function and how it is reconcilable with evolution in dogma.

M. Auguste Sabatier, pointing to the fragments of various philosophies and of other older religious systems, which the Church seems to have incorporated into her dogmatic teaching; and also to the changes which the dogmas themselves seem to have undergone in course of time, would have us conclude that her doctrinal system has been not merely modified, but wholly created by evolution; that there is no abiding germ or deposit which is the subject of development; no fixed or natural order of progress in our expression of divine truth, but only an aimless succession of variations, such as that by which dialects (unfixed by literature) pass into one another through their inherent instability and not in obedience to any purpose-directed law. One may be better or worse than another, according to the intellectual condition of the people; but not in virtue of any essential plan of stricture which

demands and controls development. He implies that no idea or concept of the divinity can be more than an almost arbitrary symbol; that as we picture the magnet's influence as an 'attraction,' a voluntary reaching out, grasping and drawing in of an invisible arm; so do we picture the object of our religious and moral emotions as a person like ourselves in all things, but infinitely magnified. In each case our concept is said to be only a convenient summary of experienced phenomena, but with no further objective value. By developing our idea of a person, we should get no nearer to the nature of this object called God, than by studying the form of the letters of which the word 'person' is composed. For in this a symbol differs from an analogue or metaphor. The latter results from a comparison between the object and something else that in part resembles it; within limits, we may increase our knowledge of the original by studying its imperfect representation. But a symbol, as we here use the term, is simply a fanciful or poetical cause for a known unaccountable effect. It does pretend to resemble the cause. Given certain devout feelings, they might have a thousand hypothetical explanations; and of these, a personal God is one. The Ptolemaic system of *radius-vectors*, the electric fluid or current, the corpuscular, and even the undulatory theory of light,

are all symbolic so far as they stand for, but in no way profess to resemble the unknown causes of the phenomena whose sequence and nature they summarize.

But the ordinary notions of theistic religion are not, as Sabatier implies, merely symbolic; they are, albeit inadequate and ill-fitting, true representative analogies. It is not that things are *as though* there were a First Cause, personal, intelligent, benevolent; but there is a Reality which, addressing itself to our finite mind through the broken language of creation, necessarily begets in us the notions answering to these terms. They are no more arbitrary or of our own poetic making than the impressions we receive through our sane senses, which are determined from without as well as from within, and cannot be altered at will. In a word, they are natural analogies, and not mere symbols, or explanatory figures.

And the same must be said of those notions under which supernatural truths have been revealed to us. They are not as symbols which can be altered and substituted at will, but are true analogies whose representative value is real, though not exactly definable. Likeness and unlikeness are mixed therein in varying proportions, nor is it possible accurately to define their limits; yet this does not deprive them of true representative value or reduce them to mere

arbitrary symbols. Thus we apprehend eternal truths, not in their separate distinctness, but as it were in solution, in as far as they can be fused into finite and human ideas, forms of thought and expression.

This utterance which Christ has given them in the conceptions and language of His time and race constitutes the original and divine involucre of the deposit of Catholic faith, the stable element which gives unity and coherence to the progress of theology. It is the function of authority to hold fast this form of sound words, to guard its original meaning against perversions arising from the imperfection of language, to supervise and control the evolution and development of its content. But this function supposes a process to be controlled—not merely an instability, an aimless flux, a forgetfulness in the human mind, but a movement of steady advance. Usually in these days the "idea" is personified and credited with an inherent expansiveness; nor is this point of view void of advantages; but in truth it is rather the human mind which is the subject of growth. As our mental eye opens wider and wider, we see more and more. Plainly it is thus with regard to physical science. Nature is just what she was a thousand years ago. But by associated work, by men heaping their experiences and reflections together, the col-

lective scientific mind has multiplied its percipience indefinitely. We do not deny all casuality to the object, as though Nature herself were not effectively co-operant in this advance. Though the sun could not create the eye out of nothing—could not develop sight in a stone; yet where there is latent power of vision, light will force its way in,—will wake and expand it. So, too, the order and uniformity of sequence and co-existence which prevails in Nature must beat upon the human mind until it elicits from it all the response it is capable of. In like manner, the Divine truth that is embodied in the deposit of Christian revelation, gradually shapes the Church's collective mind into a more perfect conformity with itself, and exercises the office of *idée directrice* in regard to its growth.

In respect to matters of divine faith there can be no accretion, no development in the strict sense, but only an evolution. To all intents and purposes the deposit of faith is as a document delivered once and for all into the Church's hands to which she can add, and from which she can take, not an iota or tittle. Her only mental progress in its regard is that of a clearer, deeper, and fuller penetration of its meaning. But in the illustration and expression of its meaning there is room for something more akin to development. The original language

and analogy in which its ideas were divinely expressed admit of translation into other languages, permeated perhaps by other philosophies. Over all these essays at interpreting the Word to diverse intelligences and in diverse tongues, the Church sits as judge, and declares what is true and false, *in sensu auctoris*. Herein she seems to incorporate much extraneous matter into her dogma—symbolic images, philosophical modes of conception, scientific and historical opinions. But all these she uses solely as instruments of expression, not as sources of truth. We are sometimes told that the Church has added Aristotle to the Gospel; that to be a Catholic is to be a hylomorphist; that transubstantiation involves the ten categories of the peripatetics. In truth there is no man, however ignorant, without a philosophy; and though in all systems there is an element of agreement answering to the common structure of the human mind, none of them is perfect or final. No one can speak ten words, nor can the Church utter a single dogma without assuming some philosophy or other. When she speaks, she takes that which prevails with her hearers, and uses it to express her mind as nearly as may be; just as a missionary dealing with primitive savages has to avail himself of their modes of thought and expression and to translate the Gospel as closely as so

rude a medium, so coarse an instrument, may permit. If a man ask a question in Chinese, it is no use answering him in English; if the middle ages asked the Church questions in the language of Aristotle, it had been no use for her to answer in the language of Kant. She cares nothing for the theory of substance and accident in itself, but only so far as by that theory she can best insist on the true sense of *Hoc est corpus meum*—can best secure those words meaning to us what they meant to the Apostles.

But development as distinct from evolution, finds its place in those applications of revealed truth which are matter of Catholic doctrine rather than of divine faith. The faith is not like a foreign germ intruded into the mind, developing independently within itself, irrespective of the rest of our beliefs and experiences. Contrariwise it works itself into the whole texture of our thought, determining it and being in return determined by it. Thus, revealed truths entering into combination with unrevealed, give birth to practical and speculative conclusions, which are part of Catholic, or at least theological, teaching, but not of divine faith.

"Obviously in moral matters, as we have said elsewhere in these pages, the changing conditions of each age and country call for ever new applications

of the unchanging principles of revealed religion; and no less frequently are new truths of science and history brought into comparison and combination with the articles of faith, to give birth to theological conclusions, unknown and unknowable to former generations. To contrast unfavourably the vast complex body of present Catholic teaching with the original simplicity of the Gospel and the Apostles' Creed, is to forget that the Christian religion is a leaven, leavening the whole mass of secular knowledge, moral and speculative, feeding upon it and transforming it into its own substance; even as Christian practice mingles itself with every department of human life, social or solitary." It were as reasonable to refuse to recognize the gnarled oak to be the legitimate successor of the slender sapling of centuries ago.

We do not mean to make P. de la Barre answerable for all these reflections which have been suggested by the perusal of his stimulating book; but we hope we have been substantially faithful to his mind. His chapters on the use of symbolic images, theological analogues, and theological systematizations, as instruments of development, are as original as they are sound and useful.

His appended essay on the evolution of sciences as compared with that of theology would merit

separate treatment, did space permit, raising, as it does, the whole question as to the doctrinal value of physics, and the objectivity of its laws and classifications. But we may notice in conclusion that if we confine ourselves to theology proper, as opposed to apologetic, the parallel between its evolution and that of science is as close as the difference of subject-matter will allow. This difference lies in the fact that whereas the subject-matter upon which the physicist speculates, is augmented every day by new experiences which increase the 'deposit,' as it were, of Nature's revelation, the Christian revelation does not admit of objective addition. However perfectly we may know the internal arrangement and connection of parts in any whole, we know it and them still better, when that whole itself is known as a subordinate part of some still greater organism or system. As the sphere submitted to the observation of the physicist is widened every day, newer and higher generalizations become possible than could ever have been drawn from his former field of experience. But the deposit of revealed truth can never receive the light that a wider experience of the same order sheds on a narrower; but only such as comes through a closer examination of its own content, and a comparison thereof with the natural truths and facts

of which the human mind is in possession, or else by an increased percipience due to the general growth of the human mind. Roughly, the difference is like that which prevails between astronomy or any other physical science studied solely from a book, and studied from nature. In one case the evidence at our disposal is limited, in the other, indefinite. We might study the text-book with continual advance in the mastery of its contents; we might apply the resulting knowledge in many ways and combine it with the rest of our ideas and experiences; but had we no other source of astronomical information, it is evident that our condition would be very different to what it is.

Another point of dissimilarity between science and theology is found in the fact that science deals with external phenomena which can be pointed out and named exactly; whereas theology, like philosophy, deals largely with abstract notions which can be only symbolized by signs that appeal to eye and ear. Hence it is difficult to be sure that in the case of any two persons the same word stands for precisely the same interior idea. Moreover, the realities that revelation deals with are, if not below the horizon of human apprehension, at least on its extreme verge—to be touched from afar but never

to be compassed; whereas phenomenal nature is comfortably within our grasp.

For these reasons, even when the work of apologetic is accomplished and the Christian revelation accepted as a basis of operation, the evolution of theology can never exhibit anything like the clearness, the exactitude, the unanimity of physical science. In the scholasticism of the middle ages we have perhaps the best, though of course an unfinished, attempt at a mere dialectical unfolding of the content of revelation; and, on the whole, the agreement between theologians in those days was nearly as close as that between scientists of our own. But when the assumptions upon which this orderly fabric was raised began to be assailed under the disintegrating influence of renaissance principles, when, in due logical process, the authority, first of the Church, afterwards of Scripture and of Christ, and lastly of conscience and reason itself, was called in question, this peaceful work of internal evolution was to some extent broken off in favour of the more urgent duty of strengthening the foundations. Apologetic, which had practically no place in the *Summa* of Aquinas, has since then steadily grown in importance, in such sort that, in non-Catholic usage, it is now almost identified with theology; nor, relatively to the needs

of the modern mind, is any point disputed in the *Summa* of much consequence compared with the assumptions upon which the whole system rests.

To speak of apologetic as a science is not, as P. de la Barre points out, strictly correct. It is a method more or less 'opportunist' for securing one way or another—according to diversities of age, civilization, culture, character, and the like—that certitude which is the condition of faith. It is a scientific art rather than a science like theology proper, to which it is related somewhat as induction to deduction. Dealing as they do with the deepest problems of life and thought, it is not wonderful if apologists contrast very unfavourably with scientists; and if, in their vagueness and disagreements, they are rather like philosophers, with whom they have many problems in common. The philosopher is one who deals with the assumptions which the scientist accepts without hesitation—not on scientific grounds, but because they have to be made at every moment of practical life, and have therefore become irresistible psychological habits, though, rationally, they are as obscure and difficult to defend as the assumptions of theological science. As children think light of parental anxieties in their regard, so the physicist as a rule is untroubled by the philosopher's fear lest the

world-supporting elephant of science be standing on an unsupported tortoise. He is usually confident that, did he but care to try, his methods would carry him backwards to the sources of certitude, as easily as they carry him forward towards its limitless extensions. At all events he feels the practical man's contempt for the sceptical questioning and quixotic defending of beliefs which every one holds, and must hold, under psychological, if not under rational compulsion.

Similarly, those who, thanks to their Catholic education and surroundings, have lived in the Church as in a little world where the principles of revealed religion are assumed in thought and practice—somewhat as the principles of vulgar science are assumed in all human life—whose minds have been subjected to the nfluence of the public mind of that ecclesiastical society whose members they are, and have been insensibly dominated by its authority; whose acceptance of the said principles owes its firmness more to psychological habit than to any rational argument or conception—these will be apt to underrate the difficulties of apologetic, and to fancy that the methods of scientific theology can be carried backwards behind its first principles as easily as forwards in front of them.

Theology and science have it in common, that it is only by repeated practical assumption, by being lived and acted upon continually, that their principles can gain the psychological firmness without which mere rational justification is of little avail. Still, this rational justification has a negative and conditional value; if it cannot produce faith or conviction, it can remove obstacles and prepare the way for the action of those practical causes of certitude which God and Nature have provided as sufficient to satisfy minds that were constructed as little for speculation as our bodies were for swimming. We can swim in a poor way, but not as a fish; and we can paddle in the shallows of speculation, or traverse its surface, but we are too short-breathed to explore its depths; nor are we really at home except on the *terra firma* of action.

May, 1899.

VIII.

"THE MIND OF THE CHURCH."

A RECENT and not too lenient critic of the Catholic religion finds fault with the expression, "the Mind of the Church," as involving what might be called a fallacy of personification; a fallacy, that is, by which a collective or universal notion is treated as a concrete reality. The Church, he maintains, is but an abstraction; and the Church's Mind but an abstraction from an abstraction; and therefore doubly abstract. Now, since the only bond that unites the sundered and dissentient fragments of Christendom—East and West, North and South—is the bond of a certain similarity of faith and practice, outstanding all differences; and perhaps also the bond of some sort of descent from a common and once undivided stock, it is plain that if "the Church" stands for this group of similars, it can have no objective reality, that it is something notional and abstract like other class-ideas. But from a Catholic and Roman standpoint, "the

Church" means something as concrete as the British Government, or the Army or the Navy—and no one I presume would call these abstractions. Abstractions do not think and speak and act and fight, and get money and spend it. But the notion of the Church's *mind* seems to present a certain amount of difficulty even to Catholic thinkers, as though it stood for the average opinion of the faithful, or for that residue of agreement in belief obtained by an inspection and comparison of their several minds, and an elimination of all differences.

Again, in his recent and somewhat ingenious apology for the Catholic position, Mr. W. H. Mallock seems to some of his critics to have fallen into this fallacy of personification, in applying to the memory of the collective Church conclusions drawn from the nature and operation of the memory of conscious individuals. For recognizing truly that the Church, unlike the sects, rests her belief in the historical fact of Christ's Resurrection, not *per prius* on the Gospel record (which is an accidental, not an essential, possession, dependent on her recognition for its authorization, and not she upon it), but *per prius* on what may be called her own memory of the event, he concludes that she alone of Christian communities can afford to let criticism do its worst with documents which she

accepts, not as the ultimate sources of her information, but as in agreement with what she knows in other ways.

This view of the matter is so closely bound up with the main lines of Mr. Mallock's general thesis that we cannot deal with it clearly, unless we place ourselves at his standpoint, which is that of an impartial rationalist who regards the Roman system as a phenomenon whose form and growth is to be explained by natural and known laws, and who abstracts from, without necessarily denying, all supernatural intervention and assistance. Such a view of the matter is, for us Catholics, not without its interest and value. If current science and philosophy fail to furnish an adequate account and justification of our position, we are not greatly disturbed; but so far as in part they justify it, it is doubly justified, and we are glad to see any traces of a harmony of whose existence, even when not seen, we do not doubt.

Indeed, that divine "assistance" by which the Church is conserved (as distinguished from inspiration and other strictly supernatural or miraculous interventions by which she was brought into being), far from setting aside, acts upon and presupposes the working of those natural laws which govern the growth of the human mind and of society. If

then these very laws have come to be better, though not adequately, understood in our own days, it were no small gain to apologetics could it be shown that what might seem to the superficial to be an aimless and lawless departure from the original type of Christianity, were in truth nothing more than the necessary and legitimate resultant of those natural laws of growth which are practically to be identified with the Divine Will. The very unconsciousness with which in past centuries men worked out the design of which they are only now becoming explicitly conscious, is itself an indication of an overruling mind and hand, of which they in their imagined liberty were but passive instruments. It is especially in its anticipation of, and preparation for, future developments unforeseen by us, that all organic growth is felt to be the work of God; and a better and more scientific comprehension of the Church's history—the story of her growth—may prove her to be as evidently a work of God as any flower of the field or tree of the forest, or as man himself, the image and likeness of God. We are yet far from such a comprehensive view; and Mr. Mallock rather suggests that it may lead to the desired demonstration, than affirms that it actually does so. The ground has only been broken by Harnack and the school he represents;

but however much we may dissent from their results, we cannot repudiate or undervalue their methods. At present, they have it largely their own way, for lack of Catholic labourers in the same field. Newman's keen instinct anticipated the need there would be later of meeting such antagonists fairly on their own ground, when he attempted to lay down the criteria of true and false developments; and although he did so in the interests of a much narrower and now almost obsolete controversy, yet his principles are available largely for that far wider one into which it has resolved itself. In their light only can we read in what else were a record of blind gropings and aimless fluctuations, the history of an *idea* gradually unfolding itself in the "mind of the Church," proving every spirit, whether it be of God; building up or destroying; choosing and rejecting; subduing all things unto itself.

Looked at, therefore, from such a rationalistic standpoint as that assumed by Mr. Mallock or Dr. Harnack or the other critic to whom we referred at the beginning, how far does the Catholic system present the appearance of a natural and legitimate resultant of the laws of growth, as at present formulated? To answer this question more adequately will cost many long years of labour

and controversy, historical and philosophical, nor need we ever expect an answer that will be final and incontrovertible. Still, as far as present results go, an outsider's view of the matter will be somewhat as follows.[1]

Primitive as is the explicit belief in an infallible and divinely assisted Church; yet the conception must at first have been obscured by the consciousness of a still better dispensation proper to the

[1] To avoid cumbering the text with explanatory clauses and indirect tenses, let it suffice to state here that in what follows we are trying to see how the matter presents itself to those who have as yet no belief in those legitimate assumptions which determine the Catholic view of the matter. Those assumptions from which an outsider abstracts are, first, that the same Spirit from which the revelation came through the lips of Christ and His Apostles is with the Church at all times, not revealing, but interpreting what has already been revealed. All understanding on the part of a listener depends on his spiritual kinship to the speaker—on their language, their modes of thought and life being the same. For it is thus only that hints and imperfect forms of expression can convey the speaker's full meaning to the hearer—a meaning always in excess of the bare abstract and dictionary meaning of the words used. Now the Spirit that speaks to the Church in revelation, and the Spirit of the listening Church are not merely like, but are one and the same. Secondly, it is assumed, as a corollary, that not only does the Church proclaim the same truth which Christ proclaimed, but also that Christ by His continual living co-operation, lives in and speaks through His Church, so that both the sayer and what is said are always the same. Apart from this supernatural co-operation, Christ speaks to us only from the past, as any other teacher of long ago whose words are handed down through the ages more or less faithfully.

creative period of Christianity. The lesser light will have scarcely been thought of in presence of the greater. Only under pressure of events and consequent on the withdrawal of the greater light of inspiration, will the belief in a divinely guided tradition have gradually cleared itself in the collective consciousness of the Christian people, where it had previously lain entangled with a general faith in the Church, innocent of distinctions that were not then needed.

The first Christians had experience only of an inspired Church, to whose apostles, prophets, and teachers the Holy Ghost made new revelations daily; whose controversies and problems were solved by an appeal to living oracles; whose laity were often no less gifted with the Spirit in such matters than its as yet ill-defined hierarchy. This, perhaps, was not so much belief in an inspired Church, as in inspired individuals constituting the Church. Not till prophetic inspiration had died out would council and conference come into general vogue as an organ of doctrinal decision; or the universal council assume the character of a court of final appeal. Previous to that stage of development, the collective totality and unity of Christendom was a conception of less importance and was therefore less attended to.

The sharp distinction between "inspiration" and "assistance," so familiar to the modern theologian, is but the outcome of much reflection on past controversies, questionings, and obscurities; and he needs to be on his guard against supposing an equal distinctness of conception in earlier times. We have a dull subconsciousness of principles, and we act upon them consistently and regularly, long before we come to define them. Action naturally precedes the theory and criticism of action in every department. Thus, though we seek in vain in early times for the terms of the distinction between inspiration and assistance, we are not wrong in trying to find a practical recognition of it. There must have been a time when belief in an *inspired* Church gave place to belief in a divinely assisted or infallible Church, albeit the transition may have been more or less unconscious.

Modern theologians are agreed that the sources of Christian revelation dried up abruptly at the death of St. John—the last of the Apostles; that thenceforward ecclesiastical decisions were confined to determining the content of what had already been delivered; that the organ of such decisions was the collective Church in union with the successors of St. Peter. As the result of reflection on history this is no doubt a correct analysis; but as representing

the explicit consciousness of the sub-apostolic Church, it will seem to the rationalist a somewhat naïve supposition; facts will not so easily fall into line with theories as all that.

That prophets claiming to be taught by the Holy Ghost coexisted with, and survived the Apostolic College, will be disputed by no one. To affirm that their revelations in no way contributed to the deposit of faith, either during or after the life of the Twelve, but are to be classified with the unauthorized revelations of mediæval and modern saints, is theologically true; but for the rationalist it needs proof; and still more does he need proof that this view of the matter obtained in the early Church. Undoubtedly, the apostolic dignity was regarded as *sui generis* in many ways, and the disappearance of the last of the elected eye-witnesses of Christ's ministry must have been felt as marking an epoch—an abrupt transition to a different order of things—a transition analogous to that created by the passing of Christ to His Father. Still, it was rather as first-hand witnesses of the teaching of Christ than as fountains of further revelations, that their teaching office was so widely distinguished from that of the other Christian prophets and inspired writers.

It must yet be shown historically that immediately after the death of St. John doctrinal problems

were ultimately decided by recourse to ecumenical councils, and not, as previously, by recourse to the inspired utterances of prophets; and till this is established, the rationalist takes it for granted that until the supply of prophetic utterances began to fail, together with kindred preternatural manifestations of the Spirit, the Christian people did not realize that they had passed into new conditions requiring another system of doctrinal guidance. Uncertainty as to the exact point of time which terminated the dispensation of the prophets, as well as the mixed and dubious character of much that claimed to be prophecy, would make it necessary eventually to draw a hard and fast line between what was admitted on all hands as divinely revealed and what might or might not be so; and this casuistry would result in fixing the present canon of inspired Scriptures, and in limiting the deposit of faith to the teaching of Christ and His twelve Apostles—a limit which at first may not have been exclusive, but which became so in time.

As long as the fountains of inspiration were still flowing, the principle of tradition would be in abeyance as more or less unnecessary; but when these sources were manifestly dried up, the Church's whole care would be to conserve what she had gained, to lose no drop of that supply of living water

which was to last her through her journey to the end of time. Henceforth it would be on her memory and understanding of truths once delivered to her, rather than on the intuition of other truths that she would have to depend for guidance. The notion of a *depositum fidei* and of its limitation would gradually take shape in the general consciousness. Authorities would now be consulted, not as inspired oracles, but as witnesses to and interpreters of the primitive tradition; and if for ordinary or less important contingencies the decision of a Bishop or a local council would be considered of sufficient weight to command obedience and submission, for graver matters threatening the unity of Christendom the verdict of the whole Church represented by its Bishops in council would be felt to be a court of final appeal. If the claim to doctrinal inerrancy was ever put forward by these lower courts, it could not have been very long sustained in the face of the frequent and flagrant heresy of Bishops and local churches and synods. In whatever sense these might be regarded as guided by the Holy Ghost in their official utterances, it was under such conditions that their verdict could not be taken as final and irreversible. But in the very nature of things, and quite apart from any idea of "assistance," the conclusions of a general council were more likely to

be right, and less likely to be disputed; the errancy of the ultimate court of appeal would be felt to be incompatible with all Christ's promises to His Church of protection and assistance, and equivalent to His complete abandonment of her. If the Holy Ghost would no longer teach her all truth by continued revelation and prophetic ministry, at least He would bring all things to her memory that Christ had said unto her, and would guarantee her correct understanding of those sayings which she was to keep and ponder in her heart. Thus, long before the distinction between inspiration and assistance was clearly thought out, it would have been obscurely felt; though there is nothing in the history of the earlier general councils to show that they explicitly distinguished between the sense in which they, and that in which the inspired Apostles spoke *in the name of* the Holy Ghost.

The need of this appeal to ecumenical tradition did much to emphasize the previously obscured solidarity of the various Christian communities, and, together with other factors which do not here concern us, gave rise to the more explicit conception of the Universal Church as a supreme and infallible authority—the final court of appeal against particular churches in all matters of ecumenical moment. While the several churches had each its own

prophets and oracles, and, even later, while primitive traditions were still fresh, there was less need of conference with other churches; but as these conditions gradually failed, such conference became the essential safeguard of healthy development, the corrective of undesirable variations of the general type due to local and particular causes.

After this rough outline of what would seem from a rationalist standpoint the more probable genesis of the notion of ecumenical and final authority, we may now look a little more closely into some of the ideas which the conception involves, and especially that in which we are interested at present, namely, the "Mind of the Church." The term, "deposit of faith," is by no means a simple one to explain. As has been said, with the decline of inspired and oracular guidance, the need of securing "the faith once delivered to the saints" became more urgent. What actually had occurred was explained on reflection by the doctrine according to which the authorized Christian revelation was confined to the teaching of Christ and the Twelve; and the subsequent function of the promised Paraclete was merely to keep this teaching ever fresh in the Church's memory and to guide her to an ever deeper and fuller understanding of it:

"He shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance whatsoever I have said to you." Although these words were addressed directly to the twelve first-hand witnesses of Christ's ministry, they were soon applied to the Church collectively. At no time was it ever contended that Christ or the Apostles had committed this body of teaching to so casual and uncertain a medium as the chance letters of St. Paul and one or two others, or the narratives of the Evangelists, of whom two were not even Apostles. As the living voice of the Apostolic College was admittedly the means that Christ had chosen and guaranteed for the dissemination of His doctrine, so it was to be expected that they would entrust their teaching, not to paper, but to the living voice of some corporation that should succeed them. Even if it be questioned whether any greater doctrinal authority was consciously allowed to the Twelve collectively than to each singly, and whether, consequently, the conception of an infallible teaching corporation was so familiar and natural after all; still the dissensions of bishops and individual teachers, and the appeals from their decisions to higher and more representative tribunals, must in the course of a short time have led to the explicit recognition of an ultimate and universal court of appeal, whose decisions were of necessity treated as

irreversible and infallible under pain of ecclesiastical anarchy.

Thus the full and adequate receptacle of the entire deposit of faith was not the mind of each individual bishop; or of any local synod of bishops; but the mind of the Universal Church, which was discerned, formulated, and declared in ecumenical council. This universal collective "mind" was pre-eminently the organ of the Holy Spirit. The several parts of which it was composed were fallible in their isolation, though guided into truth by the ordinary methods of God's providence in answer to prayer and inquiry. But joined together they constituted the infallible Church. Hence, this expression: "the mind of the Church," as implying something distinct from the mind of this or that individual member of the Church, cannot be hastily condemned as a mere logical abstraction, nor can it be assumed that when we speak of the "mind of the Church" as the receptacle of the original deposit of Christ's revelation, we mean that the faith in its potential entirety was entrusted to the members of the Church severally (as opposed to collectively). But, as a crowd of witnesses to the same event will be able to put together a more complete and accurate account of it than one or two, each seeing something missed by all the others; so, not only

the historic but the dogmatic truths of Christianity are seen by no single mind as completely as by the collective mind of the Church. Plainly, individuals may at times overlook or ignore even the most vital parts of the body of dogmatic truth; but short of this, no one mind is wide, deep, or clear enough to take in the totality of ecclesiastical teaching in all its aspects. Holding it completely in substance and outline, one will have a more detailed knowledge of this part; another, of that. There is a custom in the schools by which the auditors meet in conference after a lecture for repetition, so that what one has failed to hear or notice may be supplied by the others. What does this mean but that the lecture in its entirety has been committed to and is latent in the collective mind of the audience, but not in each singly—or at least not so fully and infallibly? And the effect of conference is to bring this latent knowledge into act; to piece together the various fragmentary aspects of the truth; to eliminate personal errors of accretion, diminution, and distortion; and finally to reproduce, more or less imperfectly, this general mind in each several mind. At the end of this process there is no more information possessed by the assembly than was possessed by it potentially at the beginning; but, from being potential, much of it has become actual in regard

to the assembly that was not so before; while the several individuals for the most part receive an absolute increment of knowledge which before was not even potentially in their possession. Half a dozen witnesses have the entire facts of a certain case between them; yet no one of them apart holds all the facts even potentially. Let them meet and talk it over, and all know at the end what none knew wholly at the beginning.

Thus, as a great cloud of witnesses differs from a single witness to the same event, and ensures an almost infallible testimony; so the "mind of the Church" differs from the mind of any individual Churchman, or even from that of any party or section in the Church. Further, as has been implied, we must distinguish between the mind of the Church dispersed and the mind of the Church in council. It is only by speech and intercommunication that each can borrow the results of the experience and reflection of others, and lend those of his own, or that the light scattered in many minds can be focussed to a point and brought to the explicit consciousness of each and all. Prior to such conference (howsoever effected) the collective mind of the Church is but potential, as the individual mind is with regard to a truth for which

it possesses all the data, before it has put these data together.

But though it is especially by means of conference that the general mind of any community is advanced and brought from potentiality to act; and that, by consequence, the minds of its several members are regulated, enlightened, and brought into harmony with one another; still this harvest is first prepared secretly underground; and it is during the intervals between such seasons of conference that the individual members gather together, and give shape to, their contributions to the common fund, whence the truth is to be built up. After each re-union they disperse, holding a common creed, with all substantial differences eliminated, with the mind of the Church reproduced in their several minds; and they go each his own way bearing this seed, which will yield diverse fruit according to the soil in which it is set. For no truth can remain unaltered in a living mind. In the spontaneous endeavour to bring it into harmony with the rest of our knowledge, and the rest of our knowledge into harmony with it, questions and difficulties will arise and will be answered according to each one's ability and information, and eventually the truth in question will receive a further development and interpretation, differing in different

minds, so that a new conference, disputation, and comparison of ideas will be needed if unanimity is to be restored again. It is somewhat as with a living and growing language. Let any section of the community be severed from the rest, and it will develop eccentricities which can only be corrected by the restoration of intercourse.

Whatever is part of the mind must grow with its growth; and he who should deny subjective development in articles of faith would either be ignorant of the necessary laws of thought, or else would confound the mere bundle of words in which the belief is cased with the belief itself. A man who finds no trace of development in his own religious beliefs since childhood, is convicted of never having thought about those beliefs at all; or even of never having attached any sense to the sounds which he re-echoes. His creed is abracadabra to him and nothing more. So far therefore as there is growth and development in the collective mind of the Church, it is because there is a previous growth and development going on in the mind of its individual members, the results of which are gathered up, sorted, and harmonized by conference and intercourse. It is not only in the deliberations of councils, but also in the secret meditations of each believing soul that we are to

trace the operation of that Spirit whose mission is to guide the Church into all truth.

The guidance offered to individuals on the condition of prayer and inquiry is fallible in matters not already determined by the Universal Church. But from the nature of the case, and apart from all Divine promises, the decisions of the ultimate court of appeal must be treated as infallible if schism and anarchy are to be avoided. Conceivably, the feeling that it ought to be so, first led to the inquiry if it were so, and thence to the recognition that it was so. Until we come to the court of final appeal, no such necessity can be pleaded; and then, only in matters of the extremest moment, where the unity of Christendom is threatened. Miracles and supernatural interventions are not to be needlessly invoked. It is a fundamental principle of God's economy in our regard, not to help men where they can easily help themselves, lest in releasing them from profitable exertion, He should hinder the fuller development of their faculties, gifts, and graces, by a sort of cruel kindness and weakly indulgence. While, then, it was to be expected that He should make sufficient provision in His Church for the settling of controversies inimical to unity; more than sufficient was not to be looked for. For He uses our

several insufficiencies to bind us close together into one social body whose members are dependent each on all the rest; and so in His Church, the individual is dependent on his communion with the whole body for light as well as for grace. It is to no section or part or separate person that He promises infallible guidance, but to all collectively when gathered together in His name, with Him in their midst; and to each severally only through union with and in dependence on the whole. God, like Nature, *non deficit in necessariis.* The individual has the collective Church to fall back upon; but the collective Church has only God.

Be it remembered that in all this we are considering what ought to be expected *in the nature of things;* we are not allowing for the influence that definite texts and promises may have had in shaping the conception of ecclesiastical authority; we are going on the lines of the dictum that "if God had not given us the Pope we should have had to invent one;" we are showing that had there been no such recorded texts or promises, the same results would have been arrived at sooner or later. If then it be contended, as it has been, that these texts cannot fully support the weighty structure that has been built upon them by modern exegesis; that certain Fathers of the early Church saw no

such meaning in them as some of us now see, such a contention only creates a new line of argument in place of the one it would destroy. For it gives to the same texts a certain confirmatory value, inasmuch as after-events have revealed an evident meaning in them that could not have been divined in earlier times, and thus proving them to be prophetic and anticipatory of future developments, have shown the course of the Church's history to be the fulfilment of a divinely foreordained scheme, analogous with the natural process of organic growth.

On the supposition that there was no further addition to be looked for to the body of truth already revealed by Christ, the Church's work with regard to this would be one simply of memory and understanding or reflection; just as the individual who is removed from any source of additional information in a given matter can do no more than "keep these sayings and ponder them in his heart." Nor can we say that this rumination is sterile. To call back the sum total of our impressions and piece them together; to deepen those that were faint; to secure them as a permanent possession; to analyze and interpret their significance—all this is a real mental gain; and in some sense an advance or development;

but not in the full sense. For there are two further stages. First, at the given moment in which we receive some new truth into our mind, we possess a certain body of knowledge and information into which the new truth has to be harmoniously fitted. If it throws light on all the rest of our mind, the rest also throws light upon it. We do not at the first instant accomplish this act of adjustment and comparison; the new leaven works its way slowly; as it modifies the rest of our mind by its action, so by reaction it is itself gradually modified—and this is a development distinct from that which takes place through the rumination on a truth or fact viewed apart by itself, and not in relation to other truths and facts. But secondly, and in addition to this, our mind is hourly taking in new experience of all kinds; and experience is to the mind what light is to the eye. As the same identical object reveals itself more fully under a stronger light, so to the more richly-stored and cultivated mind the same truth is fraught with a greater depth of significance, which no mere analysis, however acute on the part of a less informed intelligence, could have drawn from it.[1]

[1] *e.g.*, The different significance the same story of the *Magna Carta* will have for a matured politician and for an intelligent sixth-form boy.

From what has been said about the collective mind of a community, it will be evident that this law of the development of ideas avails there without any qualification. Not only is the Church's mind exercised in the faithful remembrance of the truth committed to her by Christ and in an ever exacter analysis and formulation of its context, considered absolutely and apart from its relation to other knowledge; but also she is continually harmonizing it with other departments of human thought, translating it into the categories of current philosophy and science. Else the department of revelation would be a walled-off Chinese empire, holding no intercourse with the outside world of experience; whereas its mission is to draw all things to itself, to be a light on a candlestick lighting the whole house; not to be protected under a bushel. Indeed, it is only so far as articles of faith do harmonize with the rest of our thought, that they are more to us than bundles of words; sounds without any sense. Only so far as "person," "nature," "substance," "God," "man," &c., are already familiar ideas to me, will the dogma of the Incarnation have any meaning for me whatever—any sense that I can lay hold of and believe.

But we must take account not only of this harmonizing of the Church's creed with the general

knowledge of any given period, and of the consequent interpretation and development it receives in the process; but we must also reckon with the progress of general knowledge, experience, and reflection from period to period. Granting that there is no new revelation of doctrine, no addition to that deposit delivered once and for all; yet owing to the continual alteration and growth of the collective mind of the race, its power of understanding and comprehension is ever progressing in regard even to comparatively simple objects, much more in regard to those—such as the natural world, or the personality of Christ—which must for ever exceed its grasp indefinitely. The more the collective mind becomes capable of seeing, in virtue of accumulated knowledge and wisdom of all kinds, the more it sees in Christ and His religion. This point is sufficiently important to justify a somewhat elaborate illustration to which we may recur more than once in our subsequent difficulties.

Let us suppose, first, the case of some really great and good man who has had a singularly wide and varied experience of human life, and who finding himself suddenly at the point of death calls to his side his little son of eight or nine years, on whom his hopes and affections are set, and endeavours in the few moments that are left to

him to impart to this child the fruit of all his experience and reflection, so as to give him the means of guiding himself aright in the midst of an evil and perverse generation. Plainly he cannot by any possibility in so short a time embody the sum total of his experience in all its detail, but at best a pregnant summary of its most important results. He must select those more vital and governing principles from which a complete and elaborate philosophy of life may be reconstructed by after-reflection. But a far greater difficulty will arise from the difference of language between father and child—language being the outward expression of the inward mind and varying with all its variations. Even were it possible to put a novel of Meredith's into words of one syllable, each singly understandable by a child, yet the resulting combinations so built up would be simply unmeaning to a mind destitute of similar experiences wherewith to compare, recognize, and classify those presented in the fiction. Our understanding of what is retailed to us by others is eventually measured by the extent of our own first-hand experience, internal and external. Just so far as there is something common (at least analogously) to the childish and the mature view of life, will it be possible to translate the latter imperfectly into the

language of the former, to express the greater in terms of the less. Maxims of honour, justice, benevolence, unselfishness, prudence, self-restraint, courage, so far as they are of universal application, can be illustrated from the narrowest and simplest form of social life, and can be made to regulate the conduct of a child in relation to himself and others. But the remoter conclusions deducible from these principles, and their application to more complicated circumstances, will seem unintelligible, and even contradictory, to those who have never had to face such problems. They may understand the sense of what is said, but its truth and wisdom cannot be fully realized without further experience. So as the child grows up and mixes with men and gathers experience, he will come to realize the meaning of many sayings which at first were little more to him than mere bundles of words. And the advantage of such a body of precepts is twofold: first, to confirm the results of his own experience by the testimony of another who has trod the same path before him; secondly, to supplement his own lack of experience by lighting the way for him one step ahead. For each step he takes reveals to him the next to be taken, by raising those doubts and problems whose solution has been revealed to him—no answer having any real signi-

ficance for us till the question has been raised in our own mind. It will be clear from all this that the child's intelligence of this imparted "deposit" of knowledge may develop in the three ways already explained. First, by the piecing together and sifting of the information considered apart and by itself. Secondly, by its assimilation with the rest of the child's knowledge and experience as then existing, whereby these maxims being applied to many detailed matters, will grow into a much more bulky system of life, including many fragments and beliefs not contained in the precepts originally delivered, but produced by their combination with other beliefs and experiences. Thirdly and chiefly, by the deeper and more comprehensive intelligence of those maxims, owing to the increased capacity of the mind due to the accumulated results of experience and reflection; in other words, owing to the gradual approximation of the mind of the learner to the mind of the teacher. This fuller sense is derived not through any mere analysis or dissection of the words uttered, but from an appreciation of the fact that they were necessarily inadequate to the truth, which they but hinted at, and figured in the rough; that they were far too narrow for their pregnant sense, which sense is to be determined not by grammar or by logic, but by

that growing sympathy with another mind which makes a touch or a glance more eloquent than chapters and tomes of explanation. The true sense of a word in the concrete is or may be quite different from its abstract or dictionary sense. It is just what the speaker intended to convey by it; and his Yea may mean Nay, or his Nay, Yea Reflecting in later years on the words of his father, this child will see that they really meant far more than any grammatical or logical analysis could have got out of them; that their concrete sense was far in excess of their abstract or dictionary sense.

This illustration, taken from the development of the individual mind, may prepare the way for one more apposite to our purpose, drawn from the growth of the collective mind of a community.

Let us imagine someone thoroughly versed in all the intricacies of our modern English civilization, and with such a comprehensive and detailed grasp of the full content of that idea as is really possessed by no single mind. And let us suppose that from a philanthropic motive he desires to convey this idea to the mind of some remote savage tribe with whom his lot is cast for a brief period, and with whose language and modes of thought he has become perfectly familiar. What he desires to convey to them is in some sense *one* idea, *i.e.*, one organically.

For, as the individual man, body and soul, with all his faculties is one organism, and as by consequence his life and proper operation ought to be a *conspiratio* of many actions to one end, apart from which and from one another, no one action is fully intelligible; so a society or civilization is a true and infinitely complex organism, and its corporate life is the resultant of a multitude of functions directed to one end, by which alone each, in connection with all the rest, is interpreted and explained. Where the division of labour and function has been carried out to great perfection, no one craft, profession, office, or institution can be really explained without reference to all the rest on which it depends, and to which it is directed. Hence the difference between a rudimentary and a highly developed civilization is not merely one of quantity or of more and less, but such as obtains between an embryonic form and the fully-evolved animal. The latter has actual parts and functions which the former possesses only in remote potentiality. The problem, therefore, is to express the oak in terms of the acorn.

The first difficulty, as before, will be to select the most salient features of our British civilization, since it would be impossible, even were there an adequate medium of expression, to deliver an exhaustive and detailed description of its nature.

What is needed is something like the scholastic idea of a definition, giving the proximate genus and difference—the root principles, from which the whole idea is developed dialectically.

This selection being made, there arises the far greater difficulty of "translation." A language is the exactest possible reflex or counterpart of the civilization that gave birth to it, and which can find accurate expression in no other medium. As, in our former illustration, it was necessary to translate the experience of a man of the world into the language proper to the experience of a little child, so here the institutions, customs, laws, religion, science, art, beliefs, traditions, and legends of stone-age savages have to be manipulated into some kind of illustration and expression of their transcendent counterparts in our own country. The effect created on the simpler mind will be not only mysterious and unintelligible to a great extent, but even incoherent and contradictory. Still, there will be some points of contact between our civilization and their own, else the idea would remain for ever sterile and undeveloped in their minds. The point of culture, however low, to which they have already climbed will enable them to appreciate something *a little* better, but not so much better as to be unintelligible. This "little

better" will be suggested to them in the revelation communicated to them, and, when followed up practically, will raise them to a point of further vantage, and will give them a still deeper insight into the matter. Thus, in the measure that their institutions come nearer to our own, will they be enabled to see what was really meant by the ideas once suggested to them, and how the *concrete* sense of the words intended by the speaker was far in excess of their literal and grammatical sense. Here, as before, we have a three-fold development; first, that resulting from the careful analysis of the literal and grammatical sense of the words originally delivered; secondly, that obtained by the harmonizing of this sense with the rest of their knowledge at the time being; thirdly, that resulting from the growth of their faculty of intelligence in virtue of the advance of civilization and the accumulation of the fruits of experience and reflection.

Applying all this to the Church, we see how Christ was constrained to translate the fundamental ideas of the *Civitas Dei*—of that Eternal Kingdom of Heaven far more remote from our minds than is the highest from the lowest grade of social culture—into the language and ideas of the Galilean peasantry of two thousand years ago, and how, by consequence, this deposit of revelation is

susceptible of a three-fold development—first, by the analysis of the literal and abstract sense of the words delivered or of the ideas created in the minds of the first hearers; secondly, by the intermarriage of the truths revealed with the truths and experiences naturally possessed by the minds of the hearers at any given period; thirdly, by the growth of the collective intelligence of the Church, whereby the concrete meaning of the original utterances, the truth they hinted at but could not contain, is better divined.

We have been dealing with the "Mind of the Church" so far as it means her collective *understanding* of the deposit of truth—of those divine sayings which through the centuries she keeps and ponders in her heart; and, in so doing, we have tried to meet the criticism we referred to in our opening words, and to show that the expression stands for no idle abstraction, but for something as concrete as the Church herself. It remains to enlarge on one or two points in this connection, and then to show that the Church's claim to an infallible understanding and interpretation of the deposit of revelation, pre-supposes a claim to an infallible *memory* of the same, and to see how far in the nature of things, and apart from any supernatural guarantee, she is likely to possess

such a memory, and how far, by consequence, Mr. Mallock's argument, already referred to, may be redeemed from the charge of fallacy.

II.

In the previous section we endeavoured to arrive at a more precise notion of what is meant by the "Mind of the Church," and to show that the expression stands for no mere abstraction, but for the result produced by the co-operation of a multitude of minds. We noticed how by occasional conferences, whether formal or informal, the varying fruits of individual reflection upon the faith, gathered during the interval since the last such conference, are compared, sorted, and brought into agreement, and the result added to the treasury of the Church's wisdom. We found a three-fold development which a truth or idea may receive in the mind, without substantial alteration: (1) by more subtle analysis and distinction of the terms of its expression; (2) by fuller co-ordination with the other contents of the mind; (3) by the increase of the power of mental insight due to accumulation of further experience and reflection. Sometimes, however, an idea or a science receives a development by way of addition. If I depend upon a

given text-book for my entire knowledge of natural history, however carefully I may study and analyse the text, or compare what I thus learn with other departments of my knowledge, or through the growth of my mental power, penetrate more deeply to the reality of the matter, yet the matter subjected to my investigation is one and the same thing, namely, the recorded experience of the author. But if I have direct access to the limitless book of Nature, I can go on indefinitely acquiring new food for reflective digestion.

This latter kind of development can have no place in regard to those truths of faith that are known and knowable solely by revelation. But "natural theology" and "natural ethics" are susceptible of some kind of extension and growth, though not to the same extent as are physical sciences; and the stage of a people's mental development in these philosophies will seriously affect their intelligence of the religion of Christ, for better or for worse—as is the notorious experience of Christian missionaries in dealing with races whose mental categories are altogether different from our own. That God is a spirit, a person; that He is a Father, a King; that He is just, wise, merciful, loving, will mean more or less, according to our particular conceptions of spirit, person,

fatherhood, kingship, justice, wisdom, and mercy. Hence the wider our eyes are opened the more shall we see in that religion which, as divine, will always transcend immeasurably the vision of the highest and most cultivated human intelligence. If every really great and good man is before his age, Christ is necessarily before every conceivable age, and the full conception of His religion will be too great for the collective or individual mind of any period; and must always be received and limited *per modum recipientis*. Other ideas our mind can outgrow, though at first they loom great; we may find them less significant than we first thought them—dressed-up truisms that need only to be stripped in order to be revealed in their barren nakedness. Christianity as interpreted by Renan or Matthew Arnold is not a development, but a re-solution or refining away. The latter, as R. H. Hutton well says, uses Bible language "to express the dwarfed convictions and withered hopes of modern rationalists who love to repeat the great words of the Bible after they have given up the strong meaning of them as fanatical and superstitious." And again, he says that, to talk of "developing" Christianity into Unitarianism or Absolute Morality, "is to talk of developing a tree into a lichen or the language of

Shakespere in the starved speech of a tribe of Esquimeaux."

Those extremely abstract and general principles which run through all our thought and govern our whole life, are the very last to be sifted out by analysis and to be recognized in their purity. This recognition results only from comparison of seemingly various maxims which reflection shows to be but different disguises, applications, or cases of the same general truth. Hence, as the first attempt at some important invention (like the steam locomotive) is enormously complex compared with later simplifications; so the first setting forth of an hypothesis, theory, or doctrinal system is often full of elaborations, epicycles, and other contrivances, which after-thought proves to be needless. In such cases development means simplification—the rejection of what is superfluous in the mode of expression. According to Matthew Arnold, who in this is a type of the extreme latitudinarian, the kernel of Christianity freed from the husk, consists in a few platitudes of the higher ethics which have been involved in a vast complexus of historical and dogmatic propositions, partly through the unclearness of those minds which created the system, partly in order to bring home to the emotional and imaginative faculties of the

multitudes those living truths which in their abstract baldness would appeal only to the philosophical *élite*. The longer the latitudinarian reflects on Christianity, the less it means for him; the longer the Church reflects on it, the more it means for her. The analogies in which its truths are expressed are conceived by the former as too roomy, as failing through excess; by the latter as too narrow, and failing by defect. In the one case it is like the attempt to describe the institutions of savages in terms of modern European civilization; in the other, it is an endeavour to translate high civilization into the language of savagery. There, too much is conveyed; here, too little.

If Christ came to reveal Heaven to earth, God to man, the eternal and infinite to the finite and temporal, it is obvious that into whatever categories of ours He might have endeavoured to squeeze such transcendent realities, they must always be marvellously narrow and inadequate; nor is the absolute difference between the Galilean fisherman of 2,000 years ago and the modern literary savant, in this respect of any appreciable value, however much it may mean for us. As a fact, it was not to the theologians of that day, but to those whom we consider the rude and

simple that He revealed these things, and it was into their notions, beliefs, traditions, and language that He had to translate the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven. To say that they could have been more fully and freely translated into the language of better cultivated minds, were to concede a seeming advantage to these latter, which is infinitesimal and quite negligible when we remember the immeasurable distance between God's mind and ours. It is not that the modern Church absolutely understands the faith better in any appreciable way, but that she understands it in a way better suited to the modern mind. Had she used our language to a former age, she would have failed in wisdom as much as were she now to use notions and expressions that for us are meaningless and obsolete. The questions that are put in different ages are different; but in all diversities of age and country the Church follows the example of her Founder, who always used the categories of those to whom He spoke; to shepherds He is a shepherd; to fishermen He is the great fisher of souls; to lawyers He is the universal judge; to traders He is a merchant; to the rabbis He is the one Master; and so, with all, He is Father and King or whatever will best bring home supernatural realities to their imagination

and customary forms of reasoning. And in like manner the Church has used the categories of Platonism, of Roman Jurisprudence, of Aristotelianism, or of whatever other thought-system she has found in vogue, for the moulding and setting forth of her message. As already remarked, the distinction between the dictionary meaning of such language and the meaning which the speaker intends to convey is of great importance. I can speak of being in the "seventh heaven" of bliss without implying that I believe in seven heavens. Had Christ spoken in the terms of the absolute and final philosophy and science (if such be conceivable), He would have been unintelligible not only to that age, but to our own and every other. In using such as He found current, as a medium of expression for quite other truths, He did not commit Himself to matters in which He has left us to the guidance of our senses, our reason, and the accumulating wisdom of the race.

With a view to defining more precisely what we mean by the "deposit of faith," we must here ask ourselves how far the *ipsissima verba* of Christ—the actual symbols and expressions by which He conveyed His revelation to the mind of the Apostles—are essentially part of our tradition and heritage.

From a Catholic standpoint the preservation of the New Testament documents is merely contingent; and apart from such records no authenticated words of Christ and His Apostles are preserved to us by oral tradition. Had these writings perished, we should possess the whole substance, but none of the form of Christ's doctrine. But what is that substance as distinct from words and form; since the Church has no intuition of the Eternal Realities—no revealing power? If she need not remember the exact presentment—verbal and mental—of those realities conveyed to the first hearers, what is it that remains the same? Here Vincent of Lerins comes to our aid. I can be sure that the babe of so many years ago is preserved identically in my own person, though I cannot exactly remember that earliest self or its states of consciousness; and so the mind of the nascent Church lives identically in the maturer mind of the present Church, though the remembrance of those earlier stages may be obscure and faulty. To revert to a former illustration: let the text-book of Natural History be lost and its remembered contents be passed from mind to mind; and though the words and form might all be changed, the substance of its meaning might conceivably be retained and even better expressed.

Still, *ex hypothesi*, the substance is not added to or increased. Similarly, no new expression of the Christian idea can reveal more truth and fact than Christ intended to reveal to the Apostles, but it may give far clearer expression and illustration to the same facts and truths. What grows and develops and yet retains its identity is, the *expression* of the Christian idea. One illustration of the same matter may be quite different from another, verbally and pictorially, and yet may contain and exceed all its illustrative value; and in it the former, though lost and forgotten, is yet preserved substantially.

Thus by the "deposit of faith" we do not mean any primitive document, nor yet that expression which the faith received in the mind of its first hearers: nor yet the present-day expression of the faith, in which that former expression is at once lost and preserved as the child is in the man; but rather, those truths and realities which were expressed and seen less perfectly in earlier forms, more perfectly in later—as though viewed through an ever clearer and more transparent medium. Let a boy study a certain historical event in the work of some first-class historian; and let us imagine that while in every other department his education advances he has no further access to

the period in question but depends on his early impression. The book is probably lost, the very words are forgotten, but the substance is retained. If every ten years or so he were to write an essay on that event and period, the facts and substance would undoubtedly be the same, but the intelligence of them far deeper; nothing would be added to what was seen from the first; but the faculty of vision would be intensified and educated. That which Christ showed us in the beginning, that, and that alone, is the deposit of faith. And the recipient of this deposit is the collective Mind of the Church, as above explained. To seek for it in documents or in the past is to seek the living among the dead. For the words of the Scriptures, or the words of the Fathers upon the Scriptures, are dead words, except in so far as the Church takes them on her lips. It is her living breath that gives them their inspiration.

In this point, as in many others, the Catholic system, unlike other systems which seek their rule of faith in the past, follows on and deepens the lines of nature. In all matters save those very few in which we ourselves are competent to judge independently from the root, our beliefs, like those of children, are "caused," rather than reasoned. That is to say, we necessarily and rationally

accept those that are generally current in the society into which we are born, until for some reason or another we are bound to call them in question. Without such natural faith, intellectual no less than practical life would be impossible. Our religious beliefs as a rule are thus inherited. That some should inherit the truth while others inherit untruth, only means that in every sense right faith is a free gift of God. For the vast majority of mankind an independently reasoned religious position is, of all notions, the most chimerical. But if on any point public opinion is notably divided, the majority who are not independent-minded in the matter, are either without opinion or else are determined by some other non-intellectual cause, whether reasonable or unreasonable. Hence we see how the Catholic ideal of an international divinely-guided consensus exactly responds to the most imperative need of the world in providing a "cause" of right belief in religious and ethical matters for the multitudes at present scattered by the spectacle of doctors differing. When men were less travelled and knowledge less diffused, it was possible for the unthinking to believe that their own religion was universal or all others patently preposterous. But now the "indifferentism" of the masses, consequent on a wider view, can only

be healed in the measure that the Catholic ideal absorbs all the other religions in the world by appropriating what is best and truest in them, as she has done in the past.

We have now to consider most briefly how far the "mind of the Church" regarded as *memory*, offers a natural guarantee for the truth of such facts as the virginal conception of Christ, His Resurrection, and Ascension. Mr. Mallock speaks of her "unbroken personal consciousness," and compares her to a "traveller speaking of a past or distant event at which he was present; she heard the salutation of Gabriel and stood by the Sepulchre on Easter morning. The dangers of every individual memory are accretion, oblivion, and distortion, *i.e.*, the addition or the omission of elements; or else the wrong arrangement of those faithfully preserved. Against these dangers we are protected partly by nature, partly by artificial contrivances, or the reasoned use of the observed laws of memory. Things are better remembered according as they are felt to be more interesting and important. Also the frequent repetition or re-impression of a fact secures it against oblivion. In the criticism of our memory, we have eventually to depend on memory itself; so that if we cannot assume reliability in the main headings of our

experience we are reduced to impotent scepticism. Looking back over our past, a certain chain of leading memories stands out as of unquestionable authenticity; and by their coherence or disagreement with such elements of our experience we judge the value of our weaker and more dubious remembrances. Applying all this to the corporate memory of a community, it seems that if the dangers of accretion, oblivion, and distortion are multiplied, the safeguards and corrections are multiplied in proportion. Individual eccentricities and variants are likely to be eliminated by conference and comparison, and in the multitude of witnesses, as in the multitude of counsellors, there is safety. In regard, therefore, to those central facts on which Christianity rests; in which its supreme interest is vested; which have been steadily re-asserted and re-impressed on the Church's memory day by day through century after century; which, moreover, she has used every artifice to fix and record; which are the rule and corrective whereby the great tangled mass of legend and tradition necessarily gathered by a world-wide society in the course of ages is sorted and tested —in regard to such central facts there is a strong presumption in favour of the Church's tradition, quite apart from any promise of supernatural

assistance or special providence. Given such assistance, the Catholic appeal to the living testimony of the Church for the truth of such facts, is altogether reasonable and consistent.

As with the Church's understanding, so with her memory; there may be error in abundance, but there is an infallible criterion to fall back upon; there are first principles, so to say, of memory by which deviations can be corrected. Else not only the mind of the Church, but the mind of every human society would be paralyzed by that same scepticism which results in the individual from the denial of those implications without which experience would be impossible.

Aug. Sept. 1900.

IX.

THE USE OF SCHOLASTICISM.

RATIONALISM and *Traditionalism* may conveniently be used as terms to denote two philosophical extremes or excesses, towards one or other of which every mind, and the mind of every people and age, is unduly bent. Rationalism, in this sense, repudiates wholly, or suspects and distrusts, any assent which is not based on self-evidence or logical demonstration. Traditionalism, seeing the sceptical and unpractical issue of Rationalism, not only accepts the consent of mankind as an excellent working criterion, but would make it the universal, final, and infallible guide. Each of these erroneous extremes is founded on a truth too much neglected and overlooked by the other; and, according to the recognized law of its growth, it is only after a series of diminishing oscillations from one to the other that the human mind can hope to find rest and equilibrium in the golden mean. If *Rationalism* stands for an abuse of

reason, *Traditionalism* stands for an abuse of the principle of faith. To establish the right use of faith and reason, and their exact relation one to another, is a problem which is ever gradually approaching a final solution, but which still presents many obscure points.

We may assume, what has so often been abundantly demonstrated, that the great bulk of our beliefs rest on motives which are not strictly rational, although in a broader sense they may be justified as prudent, and as so far rational. On a former occasion, when criticizing Mr. Balfour's work on "The Foundations of Belief," we wrote as follows:[1]

A moment's reflection will show that if, under pain of unreasonableness, we were bound to discredit every assertion until personally satisfied, from intrinsic reasons, mental growth would be impossible and society would perish. It would be like forbidding one to eat any morsel of food that he had not drawn out of the ground and prepared by his own unaided labour. Nor, to go much further with Mr. Balfour, would the effects be much less disastrous were one to refuse credence to any testimony that did not evidently conform to the logician's criterion of testimony.

Authority, as Mr. Balfour takes it, is a strictly non-rational cause of belief; and its results, though reasonably accepted, have not *per se* a justification in

[1] *The Month*, May, 1895.

philosophy, but must seek it elsewhere. That he means something more than such an instinctively rational acquiescence in authority as might be justified by the "Illative Sense" seems to us plain, though he does not explicitly advert to the possible confusion. That children and simple folk believe what they are told is often to a great extent a rational act, so far as they confusedly believe, rightly or wrongly, that their informant is a competent and truthful witness, although to analyze or state their reason is beyond them. But, according to Mr. Balfour, reason here but supervenes, and mingles its force with that of a strong mental instinct analogous to the gregarious or imitative instincts of animals, which inclines us to believe an assertion as such, rather than discredit it.

That this tendency to be influenced by assertion, to assent rather than to doubt in the absence of all evidence, does exist, can hardly be denied. Proofs abound to show that men's beliefs and conclusions do, as a fact, rest to a great extent on anything but reason. The existence of prejudice is not so much an abuse of reason as of this instinctive tendency to believe; it is but a hurtful issue of a principle which is, on the whole, useful and beneficial, though, like all instincts, fallible through want of adaptability to particular cases. Hence it is for reason not to despise, but to safeguard and supplement this instinct of docility.

That the same political views should be held by all the members of the same family for generations, plainly points to a non-rational influence at work; that on the whole all the members of one religious order should agree as to the issue of an open question against all the members of another order,—and that, for generations,

—is manifestly another instance in point. That in deference to the "time-spirit" nearly all philosophers should agree in certain leading ethical and scientific conclusions, while hopelessly at variance about their derivation and worth, may serve as another example. It is needless to prove the existence of what is so notorious; but Mr. Balfour's concern is to show that this influence, and the instinct it appeals to, are an absolutely necessary and, in the rough, a legitimate source of beliefs. Far from clogging the growth of the mind, it supplies it with its daily bread. To refuse these supplies is to perish. It is for reason to sift and compare, to eliminate what is incompatible, to verify and prove; but as an inventive faculty reason is feeble, almost useless in comparison. What reason disproves is reasonably rejected; but what reason cannot prove, remains by the same title that it entered.

Even most of the beliefs that we seem to owe to reason, depend more fully on *influence* which furnishes so many of the premises. By reasoning we but condition and determine their action upon our mind; and to credit ourselves with the whole result would be to be proud of growing on the score that we had eaten our meals regularly. No doubt one of the causes why reason is in such superior repute is that we look on its conclusions as actively self-produced, forgetting how largely we are passively influenced by the premises which we use, and of which we can often give no rational account.

There are very few who can give reasons at all for much that they believe; still less, reasons that are truly the cause of those beliefs, and not a mere after-justification of an instinctive acquiescence in authority.

Like free-choice in the determination of our actions, reason in the determination of our opinions is everything in respect to its rights, but comparatively nothing in its actual results—a supreme court of appeal, but rarely appealed to. It criticises when needful, but originates little. It supplements where the ordinary means is deficient, *i.e.*, where our instinct of docility and our acquired mental habits fail us.

Mr. Balfour insists that this instinct is not only beneficial but necessary to all mental growth and progress. He defends it against the contempt with which it is fashionable to treat it, especially on the part of "Naturalists" whose system really rests on beliefs which are non-rational, and accepted merely on psychological compulsion, and whose only reasonable justification is trust in Nature's selected methods for man's well-being. Our relation to this mental instinct is much the same as that in which we stand to other instincts. Previous to the full use of reason we are governed by them wholly. They are for the most part efficacious means to the securing of necessary and natural ends, but, being of the nature of physical laws, they are not self-adaptive to exceptional cases. When reason supervenes, it may at times resist these instincts for motives of its own kind; or it may freely and deliberately approve and follow them; or it may direct, modify, and adapt them; or, finally, it may trust the reins to Nature, and simply stand by to check or veto whatever is seemingly against right order. In all these cases, even in the last, the result is in some sense reasonable, though not the direct effect of reason. Even the policeman who stands by

unseen to prevent a disturbance, may be credited with the order preserved by the crowd.

So, too, many of our beliefs may be called reasonable in so far as reason would veto any patent absurdity. Still there will always be a large residuum with which reason has had nothing to do; mere unsorted material, by no means to be bundled out indiscriminately.

As is implied in the passages just cited, the formation of the mind is dependent both on reason and on what Mr. Balfour calls "authority," but what we prefer to call "tradition." To exalt one of these agencies at the expense of the other, or, still worse, to its exclusion, is to fall into the error of "Rationalism" or of "Traditionalism," as the case may be.

It would be misleading to press the analogy of bodily nutrition, so as to regard tradition as the feeder of the mind, furnishing it with pabulum which reason sorts, digests, and assimilates; for the great bulk of our assents which are woven into the texture of our mind never are and never can be subjected to the criticism of our reason at all. We have simply to recognize the coexistence of two distinct orders of assent in our mind; one, of those in regard to which we are largely passive, and another, of those which we have in some sense formed for ourselves. It is evident that in

the latter our intellectual dignity as free self-forming agents is chiefly vindicated, and that it is only the very limited character of that dignity that makes it needful to supplement our vast deficiencies by the humble and more humbling provision. It is this reflection that inclines our pride to resent this dependence on tradition, and to affect that rationalism which idly professes to believe nothing that cannot be proved. Had we entered upon existence with a mind already stored with innate judgments on every conceivable matter, with unaccountable but irresistible synthetic *à priori* assents, however we might have been mortified by our dependence on so needful a supplement of our narrow experience and feeble reasoning power, yet we should have been able to put that all-but divine faith in such knowledge which we put in the wisdom of nature's instincts. Our trust would be such as we place in one who rarely or never deceives, and whose word is as good as a proof of the truth which it asserts. But we have been provided for far more humbly. God does not directly mould our mind Himself, or even through necessary causes which execute His designs infallibly, but through the common beliefs and opinions of the society into which we are born and in which we live; through the intellectual atmosphere

which we breathe; that is, through the instrumentality of frail men who can both deceive and be deceived. Thus it is that the irregularities of individuals are lost in the crowd; and though the multitude may be deceived, the multitude will not readily agree to deceive, still less will the whole race, and that through successive generations. Without accepting the consent of the millions as an ultimate test of truth, yet in many matters within its competence it is obviously a reliable test, while in others it justifies a practical and prudent assent. Yet, so far as tradition is our only source of knowledge, it is full of many impurities; and were we dependent on it alone we should pay for the truth with a variable but always a very appreciable percentage of error, though we should have no more cause of just complaint against the goodness of Nature than have the animals whose instincts at times fail them, but are in the main reliable. Not that tradition is necessarily reliable in the greater *number* of its truths, but that it is so for the greater practical truths on which the life and preservation of the race depends—else the race had perished long since. It is not and does not pretend to be a provision for speculative intelligence. If there is such a thing as pride of intellect—and surely there is, though it is oftenest a stone to fling

at those who do not make way for our own pride—it would seem to lie in a certain impatience at the limited nature of our mental faculties, a resentment that we are not created independent and self-sufficing in regard to the possession of truth, but must hang upon others and gather tares with our wheat, and struggle from darkness to dimness and from dimness to a little light about little things. We would be as gods, knowing all things for ourselves; and so the vessel complains to the potter: Why hast thou formed me thus?

Although faith, in itself, apart from those preambles which are its conditions but not its cause, is a non-rational (not an irrational) assent, yet in so far as it is an obedience of the mind, believing simply because it is right to believe, not from a criticism of the speaker's competence and veracity, but from a recognition of his divine authority to govern and shape the mind at his will, it is a motive of certitude, *i.e.*, of subjective firmness in adhering to a truth. Here, as soon, and as long, as we recognize an authority with a right to govern and command our assents, all disobedience, and therefore all doubt, becomes sinful. There is, however, an immeasurable difference between the firmness of the assent which a parent exacts of his child and that which God

exacts of His creature, for each rightly exacts a firmness proportioned to the value of their own competence and no more. No mother would require of her child to receive her word as the word of God, but only at her own estimate of its value. To exact more, were an abuse of authority; to exact as much, without any proof or defence of her intellectual competence and veracity, is lawful, just as she may lawfully physic or feed or otherwise govern her child in body or mind or morals without being called upon first to prove her competence to the said child. That the child's confidence may be occasionally abused, no more interferes with the moral duty of docility than does the possibility of misguidance in practical matters of conduct excuse from obedience in general. Unless the error be self-evident or clearly evident, the child must submit to authority as to its natural God-appointed guide, pending the growth of the power of self-guidance.

If we look into the matter more closely we shall find that, as in the case of our other natural sources of knowledge, so here, the occasional error is due to our own inferences from the *data* we receive, and is not contained in the *data* themselves.

Although the child (in years or culture) can

form no logical estimate of the value of testimony, yet it has a certain instinctive estimate. Its assent does not fall *directly* upon the objective verity, but upon the verity as mirrored and reflected in the mind of its informant, and as getting its objective value therefrom. To pass from the undoubted, self-evident fact that its mother says that fire burns, to the further fact that fire does actually burn, is a matter of immediate though unconscious inference, which may deceive occasionally. Every parental assertion as such has a certain weight of probability which in normal cases may be treated as practical certainty, and makes the unconscious inference from assertion to fact quite legitimate and prudent, though not infallible. Similarly the assent accorded to particular matters of public tradition and general agreement falls directly upon the fact that it is publicly said and generally agreed to; and if the mind is, in one and the same act, reflected from the mirror to the reality—if, that is, because it is generally *said to be* so, we infer that it *is* so—this inference has a value just proportioned to the trustworthiness of public opinion in such matters, and no more. For example, much that we read in the legends of the saints is not professedly a record of facts, but of what have been commonly

accounted as facts. It gives us the impression made by the saint's personality on the public mind of past times. We are looking into a mirror, and not directly into realities. It is left to our skill and intelligence to interpret the symbolism; to recognize the man underneath the disguise of halo, and emblem, and jewelled vesture; to separate what the old schoolmen would call the "second intention" from the "first intention," the idealization from the reality, the subjective modification from the object modified. It will be strange if false miracles are not mingled with true, or if the true be recorded without some decoration and addition. With practical wisdom the Church gives us the story in the gross and as a whole, without much attempt to sever chaff from wheat, dross from gold, so long as the dross is not hurtful. Were it all given to us as objective truth, and not formally as tradition, then indeed it would be a hurt to deem fact what is not fact, however unimportant; but the only fact the Church vouches for in the matter is that these things have been generally said and believed by reputable persons, and presumably have some basis in history.

The Catholic religion, therefore, without being traditionalist, sets no small store by tradition as a method, nay, even as the principal and most

practical method of forming the human mind. She sees clearly that assents which in one way are non-rational—and amongst them the assent of Faith—are from a wider and higher point of view rational and necessary. Still, she has never regarded tradition as an exclusive or ultimate criterion of truth, or allowed its claims to stand in the face of self-evident or demonstrable contradiction. She knows well that logic and analytical reasoning can never lead the mind to super-rational truths, nor, even with any facility, security, and universality, to the common truths of theism. Yet, if analytical reason or criticism is not a guide, at least it is a test to be used; not always—else our minds would be starved—but in cases of reasonable doubt. However liable to abuse, the Church does not, on that account, discard or despise what without offence might be called the "rationalizing" of our faith—its defence against the charge of being in conflict with itself or with demonstrable truth of any kind; its illustration; its ever exacter expression; its orderly and scientific treatment. Herein we have a great safeguard against that fanaticism and superstition which would be favoured by traditionalism and a total neglect of criticism. If at certain periods she has leant over to the side of traditionalism to

counteract the rationalistic bias of the age, if to the earliest Church Aristotle was the foe of faith, she has been no less ready to lean over to the other side, and to press Aristotle into her service against an uncritical and short-sighted contempt of reason in the supposed interests of faith. Not that in any age she has been traditionalist or rationalist, or neglected the sound principles perverted by both extremes. If the matter of her earliest creeds and symbols has been provided by tradition, their very form and setting forth has been the work of reason; nor does the structure of the *Summa* of Aquinas merit the reproach of rationalism any more justly than that of the Apostles' Creed, of which it is but an evolution.

Philosophy has its due function in the collective mind of the Church as in the individual mind. Reason and analysis are not guides only, but correctives. We learn through faith, through tradition, through imitation, through unconscious inference, for the most part; that is, through sources where truth is to some extent mingled with error; and, so far as we have leisure and culture, our reason sifts and analyses these multitudinous assents; rejects what is spurious and worthless, classifies and orders the remainder, always tending to some comprehensive unification of all our knowledge

into one organic whole. So far as this last tendency is conscious and reflex, we may be said to be in quest of a philosophy; but even wherever reason in any way begins to work on the gathered materials of thought, there is an unconscious groping after this same unity. Similarly in practical matters we are guided in the main by instincts, passions, habits, customs, fashions, laws; and it is only to supplement the occasional deficiencies of these humble guides that reason is called in to decide problems of right and wrong. Philosophy, therefore, is very dispensable for most individuals, but not so for society as a whole. There must be those who frame laws, who search out truths, who correct errors and abuses, else the corruptive tendency of tradition would be unchecked.

So albeit that Divine Faith, and in a large measure human tradition, is the means whereby religious truth is apprehended by the millions of Christendom, and indeed by all in so far as they are Christians; yet the Church acknowledges the need of some sort of public philosophy whereby the very notion of faith may be vindicated, the *data* of faith set in order, expressed, and translated into the mind-language and word-language of the day, and not only defended from the charge of conflict with demonstrated truth, but in some measure

synthetised with secular knowledge into one organic whole. Still more needful is such a corrective rationalism when it is a question not of the infallible religious data of Divine Faith, but the very fallible religious data of human tradition.

For this end the Church has always implicitly or explicitly availed herself of some kind of philosophy in giving expression to her teaching. Those who find fault with her for this forget that there is a philosophy, nay, a metaphysics implied in the common language of the rudest savage or the simplest child. It is not only the Gospel of St. John but the Sermon on the Mount which depends for its intelligibility on a presupposed philosophy.

We may, not unfairly, to some extent regard a philosophy as a mind-language, as a system of inward ideal signs or forms by which the mind actively presents and expresses to itself the whole body of that knowledge of which it is first the passive recipient. "Not unfairly," since every philosophy has also a word-language whose parts and inflections answer roughly to something in the mind. And as we can largely translate from one philosophical word-language into another with substantial fidelity, we may safely infer that there is a corresponding agreement in the mind-language,

although there will always be an extensive residue of irreconcilable difference in detail owing to differences of experience, information, and reflection. In a word, as language itself is natural, and as all languages in spite of the widest differences, observe certain laws in their growth towards an even more flexible system of expression, so the tendency to unify our ideas into a system, and the fundamental lines of that procedure are common to all men, however antagonistic their analysis or expression of the process. The Catholic religion can no more be independent of philosophy than it can be of language. The Gospel is preached in human words, and the words must be translated into human thoughts and ideas; thoughts and ideas imply categories, and categories bring us into philosophy.

But then, since Catholicism is the religion of humanity, of all ages and countries, of all levels of culture, it cannot afford to make itself dependent on that which is contingent, local, and mutable, but must in some sense speak a Catholic and universal language, and rise above the differences of philosophies and grasp that which is common to all. How, as a matter of fact, has the Church dealt with this problem?

She has taken a word-language which when living had a sort of territorial universality, and

which being now dead has the greater universality of an universal and immutable standard—a language the meaning of whose terms is no longer fluctuating but fixed, and in which her teaching, once stereotyped, can be translated into the living languages of various countries as faithfully as possible. Yet this were not enough, for the realities which she proposes to our faith have first to be conceived, formed, and expressed in the ideal language of the mind before they are formulated upon the lips; they have to be clothed in philosophy before they are clothed in words. They cannot lie in the mind as disconnected apprehensions in no way entering into the thought-system. To apprehend is also to classify; it is to compare and contrast; to observe agreements and differences, likenesses and unlikenesses. And so the Church has taken a classical philosophy which when still living—and who can say that it is yet dead or will ever die, save as to its excesses and follies, as long as man's first philosophical essay is realism?—which when living attained an universality even wider than that of the Latin or Greek tongue; which was professedly the philosophy of common sense and common language; which by reason of its child-like directness and simplicity departed as little as possible from the fundamental conceptions

common to all philosophies, and in this philosophy she eventually decided to embody her dogmas, leaving it to those who should care to do so at their own risk, to translate them from the mind-forms of Aristotle into the mind-forms of other thinkers, *salva substantia.*

To suppose, however, that in using Aristotle for this purpose the Church hereby commits herself to his philosophy as the only possible or the best possible, would be almost as foolish as to suppose that she regarded ecclesiastical Latin as the original or the best possible language. She does not deny that Chinese may admirably express the fact of the Immaculate Conception, but she doee not guarantee the translation in the sense in which she guarantees the Vulgate to be substantially faithful to the originals from which it was translated. Similarly, *if* the facts which she expresses as "transubstantiation," or "hypostatic union," or "trinity" can be faithfully conveyed in the philosophy of any modern school, well and good; but she does not guarantee the translation.

Often when she condemns certain formulæ and verbal expressions, she takes them only according to the sense they bear objectively in the philosophy which she has adopted, and takes no account of the sense their author may attach to them, just as, at

other times, she condemns what is objectively defensible, as false *in sensu auctoris*.

By Scholasticism we understand the application of Aristotle to theology, or the expression of the facts and realities of revelation in the mind-language of the peripatetics. That the gain to theology in clearness, order, stability was immense no one can deny; and, as a flexible and exact medium of expression is one of the chief instruments in the evolution of any science, so here the vitality and rapid growth of theological thought in the schools was undoubtedly the result of this gain. Let us grant that it was to some extent a one-sided growth, neglecting as it did the historic and inductive method, then undreamt of; that it simply evolved into explicit recognition what was already contained in received data; that it brought no new facts to light, but simply analysed the facts to hand which it took for granted. Yet this very analysis, ordering, systematising, was at the time a more urgent need. It is better to digest a little thoroughly than to overload our minds, as is now the fashion, with undigested masses of information. Doubtless, for lack of sufficient matter to work upon, this digestive process was carried in many ways to excess, and the desire to unify and systematise made men apt to press fact into accord

with theory, instead of waiting patiently for fuller light.

It was the error of the scholastics to put too full a reliance on the secular philosophy, history, physics, and criticism of their own day; to be over-eager to enter into harmony with it, and then to regard their painfully-wrought synthesis as final and perpetual. Clinging to that synthesis, their successors were often disposed either to ignore the total change of position on the part of secular thought, or else to labour vainly to bring the world back to that philosophy which their synthesis supposed, and for which alone it availed. Hence the vague idea among Catholics as well as among non-Catholics[1] that the Church had virtually incor-

[1] Though introducing a hostile conclusion, the following remark rightly insists on the contingent nature of the alliance between the Catholic creed and the philosophy which it uses to express itself:

"It should be remembered that the Eastern Church knows nothing of scholasticism, and has never passed through this phase of thought. The West has; and although as a system generally taught and received, scholasticism has passed away, yet it has not done so without leaving many a trace behind it. The reduction of matter and form to certain irreducible *minima* are again conceptions which we owe to scholasticism. The doctrine of intention as now taught is another scholastic product. Accordingly, the great Roman Church, which in formulating the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Ever-Virgin Mary has carried the application of logic to spiritual matters further than any other Church has dared to do, finds it necessary first to teach its future theologians the scholastic philosophy, that into minds prepared by

porated Aristotle's philosophy into her official teaching. That she makes use of it as a fixed standard of expression we have already seen, but that she commits herself to any of its tenets that are not necessarily accepted (however expressed) by the common sense of all mankind we may boldly deny; for, like every other philosophy worthy the name, it contains certain elements given irresistibly by the very nature of the human mind, combined with many peculiar and questionable features which are the work of human ingenuity.

That the Church should require her ecclesiastics to be well versed in the thought-language which

that teaching may be poured the Western theology built upon scholasticism." (*A Complete Manual of Canon Law*, by Oswald J. Reichel, vol. ii., Preface. London, 1896. P.T.O.)

If it be urged that "quisquis deinceps asserere, defendere seu tenere pertinaciter præsumpserit, quod anima rationalis seu intellectiva non sit forma corporis humani per se essentialiter tamquam hæreticus sit censendus" [Concilium Viennense], and that therefore Catholics are tied to the system of hylomorphism, it will be now evident how such an objection should be met. The Council addresses a public which spoke the language and used the forms of the scholastics, and therefore it uses that same language. The contrary doctrine in that same school of thought denied the substantial unity of human nature and so imperilled the right understanding of more than one dogma of faith. If the Greeks had had to deal with similar heresies they could not have formulated the truth without supposing and using some kind of philosophy. Even Anglicans can never hope to say anything intelligent or coherent without committing themselves to theories of thought and reality which form no part of revelation.

she has made her own is no more wonderful than that she should exact from them a knowledge of ecclesiastical Latin. Such action cannot be twisted into an indiscriminate approval of Aristotle and a condemnation of every other philosophy.

As far as the cultivation of an analytical habit of mind goes, it perhaps matters less that the philosophy should be absolutely unquestionable than that it should be coherent, systematic, well worked out, and as close as possible to the lines of ordinary unsophisticated thought. This, perhaps, will always give Aristotle precedence as an educational instrument, as the innumerable revivals and reactions in his favour indicate. Of course the exclusive cultivation of analytical habits to the neglect of the historical and positive methods can lead to nothing but the narrowest rationalism, and eventually to scepticism. It would be to provide an elaborate machinery with nothing to work upon. It was through this one-sidedness that the abuse, not the use, of scholasticism led to Protestantism, and thence to the widespread scepticism now prevalent outside the Church. Yet it is no less plain that an indiscriminate traditionalism would have reacted in the same direction, for it is only in the right adjustment and tempering of all methods that truth is safeguarded.

X.

THE RELATION OF THEOLOGY TO DEVOTION.

THEOLOGY may be used in a wider or a more restricted sense. Here we employ the term to signify what is known as scholastic theology, that is, the essay to translate the teachings of Catholic revelation into the terms and forms of Aristotelian philosophy; and thereby to give them a scientific unity.

Roughly speaking, the difference between the philosophical and the vulgar way of conceiving and speaking about things, is that the former is abstract, orderly, and artificial; the latter, concrete, disorderly, and natural. The exigencies of our feeble and limited memory make it necessary for us to classify our experiences into some sort of unity. A library is no use to us unless we can introduce some kind of system or order into its arrangement, and make an intelligible catalogue of its contents. We can consider the order of size, or of subject, or of authors and titles taken

alphabetically, or of date of publication; or taking any of these as the first class-note, we can employ the others for subdivision. We do not invent these orders, but we find them; and so when we map out the world into categories, we do not invent but recognize one or other of these arrangements things admit of. We can, however, classify the books, not only in our mind or in a catalogue, but also in our library; we can even classify nature in our museums; but the world at large refuses to be harnessed to our categories, and goes its own rude unscientific way. Now there is no one, perhaps, who will deny that a natural-history museum does truly represent Nature? that under a certain aspect one who has studied Nature there, knows more about her than he who has lived all his life in the woods? But only under a certain aspect is this true. For such a presentation of Nature is abstract and negatively unreal. Beetles do not march the fields in such logically ordered phalanxes; nor do they wear pins thrust through their middles; nor are birds' eyes made of glass, or their viscera of sawdust, or their muscles of wire. A visitor from some other creation who knew no more of our world than that, would think it a very simple affair; very easy to remember and to retail. Still how little would

he know of its reality compared with a denizen of the backwoods! Yet if our backwoods-man could be educated scientifically in such a museum, he would receive almost a new power of vision, a power of observing and recognizing and remembering order where before he had only seen chaos. And in this lies the great advantage of abstract and scientific consideration; of precisions that are unreal; of suppositions that are impossible. Only by these devices can we digest our experience piecemeal, which else would remain in confused unsorted masses. But the more abstract, general, and simple our classification is, and the further removed it is from the infinite complexity of concrete reality, the more we need continually to remind ourselves that its truth is merely hypothetical, and holds only in the abstract. This is what the earlier political economists (for example) forgot, when they drew many conclusions that were perfectly irrefutable, on the purely abstract supposition that man's sole motive is the desire to make money; but that were altogether false in the concrete real world where thousands of other motives complicate the problem.

It must further be noticed that on the whole the backwoods-man has a truer knowledge of Nature than a mere acquaintance with a science-

manual could ever impart. Both kinds of knowledge are in their own way lamentably imperfect; the one through indistinctness and confusion; the other through unreality and poverty of content. Yet it is less misleading to take a confused, general view of an object, than to view one of its parts or elements violently divorced from the rest. The rudest clown knows better what man is, than would some being who should know nothing but the articulation of the human skeleton—true as this latter knowledge would be as far as it went.

It is clear then that, as far as the natural world is concerned, what is scientifically true in the abstract, may be practically false in the concrete. But when we are dealing with the spiritual and supernatural world, we are under a further disadvantage; for we can think and speak of it only in analogous terms borrowed from this world of our sensuous experience, and with no more exactitude than when we would express music in terms of colour, or colour in terms of music. So far as the most abstract and ultimate ideas of our philosophy prescind from all sensible determinations of being, and deal with the merest outline and empty framework of thought, they may have some literal value in the supersensible world. We can say: This, that, or the other follows necessarily

from the principles of metaphysics, and is therefore as true as those principles are. But it is not the whole truth; and indeed the more abstract and general are the terms under which a thing is known, the less do we know about it. A comparatively concrete idea like Man or Politician gives us a mine of information about the subject of which it is predicated; whereas Being, Substance, Cause, give us the very minimum of information. Now the terms that are in any sense common to the world of our experience and to the world beyond it, are, from the nature of the case, the most barren and shadowy of all. If, *e.g.*, we look at Porphyry's tree where "substance" bifurcates into "material substance" and "spiritual substance," the former branch develops and subdivides down to the real and particular, but the later breaks off abruptly and leaves us in the dark as to all its concrete determinations. For all reason tells us, we know nothing of angels except what can be deduced *a priori* from the general idea of non-material substance. To our imagination they are utterly characterless and uninteresting beings; quite different from the saints, of whom we can sometimes feel the individuality in spite of their biographers.

Granting then all that the most exacting

metaphysician might claim, any non-analogous ideas we can form of the other world are necessarily of the thinnest and most uninstructive description, and it is only by liberal recourse to analogy that we can put any flesh on their bare ribs. Whatever shred of truth they convey to us may, or rather must, like all half-evidence, get an entirely different complexion from the additional mass of truth that is hid from us. When, however, we begin to supplement by use of analogy, and (*e.g.*) to cover the bare notion of a First Cause by clothing it with all the excellences of creation, multiplied to infinity, purified of their limitations, and fused into one simple perfection, then we must frankly own that we are trying to comprehend the incomprehensible, to equal a sphere to a plane. In saying this, we do not deny for a moment, that the infinite can to some extent be expressed in terms of the finite; but are only insisting on the purely analogous character of such expression. Nor again are we denying the utility, or even the necessity, of such an endeavour; for we should be forced equally to deny the use of all scientific, as opposed to vulgar, modes of conception; whereas these two modes check and supplement one another.

It is a received principle of scholasticism that the "connatural" object of the human mind is

this material world which is presented to our senses; and that we are forced to think of everything else, even of our own mind and soul, in the terms of that world. Hence all our "explanations" of spiritual activity are, however disguisedly, mechanical at root; thought is a kind of photography or portraiture; free-will a sort of weighing process; the soul itself, so far as it is not described negatively, is described in terms of body. Having a direct intuitive knowledge of these spiritual operations we can be, and should be, conscious that our explanations of them are inadequate and analogous. Still more when we try to explain that world beyond experience, internal or external, ought we to be on our guard lest we forget the merely analogous character of our thought. The error called "anthropomorphism" does not lie so much in thinking and speaking of God humanwise—for that we are constrained to do by the structure of our minds—as in forgetting that such a mode of conception is analogous. The chief use of metaphysic or natural theology lies in the fact—not that it gives us any more comprehensible idea of God—but that it impresses upon us the necessary inadequacy of our human way of regarding Him. Neither the metaphysical nor the vulgar idea is adequate, though taken together they correct one

another; but taken apart, it may be said that the vulgar is the less unreal of the two. To illustrate this from nearer and simpler cases: The peasant thinks of his soul as a filmy replica of self interfused with his body — as co-extended with it, part answering to part; but the philosopher will tell him that the soul is present "wholly to the whole body, and wholly to each several part." But this latter statement has no real value, save so far as it insists that the peasant's view is only equivalent and not literal truth—that is, so far as it is a repudiation of anthropomorphism. What does it tell us as to the real mode of presence? That the truth lies unassignably between two erroneous extremes; first, that the soul is, as the peasant conceives it, interfused co-extensively with the body; secondly, that it is concentrated in every point of the body. There are certain advantages attached to either mode of presence; but these two modes, though incompatible for extended substances, are in some way combined in a spiritual substance, not literally, but as far as the practical advantage of them is concerned. The vulgar notion would deprive the spirit of some of its excellence, and would create many difficulties if not recognized as inadequate and anthropomorphic. Similarly, if the philosopher forgets that he has only determined

the *locus* of truth, the extremes between which it lies inaccessibly; if he thinks that he has got to more than its practical equivalent, or has got any proper non-analogous notion of spiritual substance and presence, he may wake to find that in combining two incompatible ideas, he has got zero for his result.

The same is to be said of our conception of the Divine omnipresence:

> Out beyond the shining of the furthest star
> Thou Thyself are stretching infinitely far,
> Nature cannot hold Thee, earth is all too strait
> For Thy endless glory and Thy royal state.

This is the common, human way of viewing the matter; but the philosopher sees at once that it negates a certain perfection or advantage to be found in concentrated, "punctual" presence; and that all such advantages, however incompatible with any mode of being familiar to us, must be realized in God. Hence he insists on this latter as well; saying, at the same time, that God is not referable to space as an extension or a point might be, but in some way quite inconceivable in itself, though conceivable as to its advantages. The effect of such an explanation on the common mind will often be that God is not everywhere, as hitherto supposed, but nowhere; not far, indeed,

yet not near; not distant, yet not present. Again, eternity, to the peasant, means time without end, century upon century, *per omnia sæcula sæculorum:* the divine life, like our own, drags on, part after part, experience upon experience. God is the "Ancient of Days," lined and wrinkled with æonian cares. But to remove the limitations involved in such a conception, the philosopher tells us that God's life is *tota simul*, all gathered up into an indivisible *now*, into the imaginary crack that divides one second of time from another. As before, he tells us to take these two extreme errors together; and without attempting to fuse them, to hold them side by side in the mind, confident that the truth lies indefinably between them. And so far he does well. But if he thinks that these two assertions can be combined into a direct expression of the truth, he will come to the conclusion that God is in no way referable to time; and so miss that half-truth which the peasant apprehends.

Thus the use of philosophy lies in its insisting on the inadequacy of the vulgar statement; its abuse, in forgetting the inadequacy of its own, and thereby falling into a far more grievous error than that which it would correct.[1]

[1] It is curious to find the same lesson inculcated in a very different school, but in a parallel connection. Speaking of the

It is a fact that the Judæo-Christian revelation has been communicated in vulgar and not in

attempts of metaphysics to describe the Absolute in negations, Professor Andrew Seth (*Man's Place in the Cosmos*, p. 218) asks: "What is the inevitable effect upon the mind of this cluster of negations? Surely it will be this: Either the Absolute will be regarded as a mere unknowable with which we have no concern; or the denial of will, intellect, morality, personality, beauty, and truth" [*i.e.*, the denial of these attributes in their experienced forms and with their finite limitations and distinctness] "will be taken to mean that the Absolute is an unity indifferent to these higher aspects of experience. It will be regarded as non-personal and impersonal in the sense of being below these distinctions; and our Absolute will then remarkably resemble the soulless substance of the materialist. Nothing is more certain than that extremes meet in this fashion; and that the attempt to reach the super-human falls back into the infra-human. Now Mr. Bradley, of course, intends his unity to be a higher, not a lower unity. 'The Absolute is not personal, because it is personal and more. It is, in a word, super-personal.' But he is not blind to the dangers that lurk in his denials. 'It is better,' he even warns us, if there is risk of falling back upon the lower unity, 'to affirm personality than to call the Absolute impersonal.' But there is more than a risk, I maintain; there is a certainty that this will be the result. . . . Our statements about the 'Absolute' . . . are actually nearer the truth when they give up the pretence of literal exactitude, and speak in terms (say) of morality and religion, applying to it the characteristics of our own highest experience. Such language recognizes itself in general (or at least, it certainly should recognize itself) as possessing only symbolical truth—as being, in fact, 'thrown out,' as Matthew Arnold used to say, at a vast reality. But both religion and the higher poetry—just because they give up the pretence of an impossible exactitude—carry us, I cannot doubt, nearer to the meaning of the word, than the formulæ of an abstract metaphysics."

philosophical terms and modes of thought. The Old Testament seems frankly anthropomorphic from the first; God lives, thinks, feels, acts under limitations, differing only in degree from our own; and it would almost seem as if the Incarnation were timed to counteract the weakening of religion, incident to the more abstract and philosophic theology of later ages. Men are influenced through their imagination and their emotions; and in nowise through their abstract ideas. In the measure that God is dehumanized by philosophy, He becomes unreal and ineffectual in regard to our life and conduct. God has revealed Himself, not to the wise and prudent, not to the theologian or the philosopher, but to babes, to fishermen, to peasants, to the *profanum vulgus*, and therefore He has spoken their language, leaving it to the others to translate it (at their own risk) into forms more acceptable to their taste. The Church's guardianship in the matter is to preserve the exact ideas which that simple language conveyed to its first hearers, knowing well that those human ideas and thought-forms are indefinitely inadequate to the eternal realities which they shadow forth. "This is My Body"—what did these words mean for Peter and Andrew and the rest; that is all she enquires about. What does she care about the

metaphysics of transubstantiation, except so far as metaphysicians have to be answered in their own language, and on their own assumptions? If she says the soul is the "form" of the body, it is not that she has a revelation of philosophy to communicate, but because the question is asked by a hylomorphist; and it is the nearest way the truth can be put to him.

This concrete, coloured, imaginative expression of Divine mysteries, as it lay in the mind of the first recipients, is both the *lex orandi* and the *lex credendi;* it is the rule and corrective, both of popular devotion and of rational theology. Devotion tends to become more and more anthropomorphic and forgetful of the inadequacy of revelation, and thus to run into puerilities and superstitions. Philosophical theology tends to the other extreme of excessive abstraction and vague unreality. The Church, by ever recalling them to the original rule of tradition, preserves the balance between them and makes them help one another. Just as experience is the test and check of those scientific hypotheses, by which we try to classify, unite, and explain experience; so revelation is the test and check of all philosophical attempts to unify and elucidate its contents. We do not, of course, mean that popular devotions are to dictate to theology,

but that theology together with them, must be brought to the test of primitive revelation as interpreted by the Church. Any rationalist explanation that would make prayer nonsensical, or would encourage laxity, or would make havoc of the ordinary sane and sensible religious notions of the faithful, is *eo ipso* condemned as not squaring with facts. So far, for example, as the philosophical conception of God's independence tends to create an impression that He is not pleased with our love, or grieved by our sin, it is opposed to revelation, which says: "Grieve not the Holy Spirit;" or, "My Spirit will not alway strive with man;" and which everywhere speaks of God, and therefore wants us to think of God, as subject to passions like our own. And in so thinking of God, we think inadequately no doubt, but we are far less inadequate, than were we to think of Him as passionless and indifferent. The one conception paralyzes as the other stimulates devotion. Again, if the philosophical explanation of God's working in our will creates an impression fatal to the sense of liberty and responsibility, it is so far counter to revelation; and no less so is any explanation of our liberty which would take the reins out of God's hands, or make Divine foreknowledge impossible. Here obviously is a case where philosophy shoots

aslant the truth, first on one side and then on the other; and can never strike it fair, but commends to us the paradox: "Watch, as though all depended on watching; and pray, as though all depended on praying." Again, predestination and foreknowledge are doctrines destructive of religious energy, as soon as we forget their abstract and merely scientific character; but revelation plainly intends us to go on as though God knew as little of the future as we do, and were waiting for events to develop, before fixing our doom. "Oh, did I but know that I should persevere," cried à Kempis, puzzled with the theology of predestination and trying to look at things as God sees them. "Do now, what thou wouldst do if thou didst know, and thou shalt be very safe," was the answer. Rational theology is in some sense an attempt to look at things back-before, in a non-human, non-natural way; and it is justified in this endeavour only so far as it tends to cure us of our terrestrial "provincialism;" but it is not wonderful that to us things so viewed should seem distorted and unreal, the moment we forget that its use is mainly corrective—that it is medicine and not food.

To come to more distinctively Christian beliefs, we have examples in the Trinity and Incarnation, of the inability of the human mind to strike a

truth fair in the centre, and of its need of seemingly contrary and complementary expressions of inaccessible ideas. The simple believer can successively affirm that in God there are three Persons, and that in God there is one Nature. He can even know that what is not simultaneously verifiable of creatures, may be verifiable of the Creator in some higher sense as yet unsuspected; that the truth lies midway between what he means by one person and what he means by three persons. But let the theologian begin to explain "nature," and "person," and to insist on his mentally putting together in one whole, assertions hitherto held as true but irreconcilable parts; and the chances are, that one or other of these parts will be sacrificed in the vain effort to secure a forced harmony.

But more particularly it is in relation to the Incarnation and its attendant mysteries, that it is important to remember the abstract character of certain theological conclusions, and the superiority of the concrete language of revelation as a guide to truth. The whole doctrine of Christ's κένωσις or self-emptying, can be explained in a minimizing way almost fatal to devotion, and calculated to rob the Incarnation of all its helpfulness by leaving the ordinary mind with something perilously near the phantasmal Christ of the Docetans. Christ we are

truly taught to believe, laid aside by a free act, all those prerogatives which were His birthright as the God-Man, that He might not be better off than we who have to win our share in that glory through humiliation and suffering; that He might be a High Priest touched with a feeling for our infirmities, tempted as we in all points, sin only excepted. Yet when the theologian has finished his treatise: *De Scientia Christi;* when he has impressed upon us that Christ was exempt from the two internal sources of all our temptations, *sc.*, the darkness of our mind and the rebellion of our body; that in His case, temptations from without met with no more response from within than when we offer food to a corpse; we cannot help feeling that under whatever abstraction this may be true, yet it cannot be the whole truth, unless all who have turned to Christ in their temptations and sorrows have been wofully deluded—unless the *lex orandi* and the *lex credendi* are strangely at strife. Also when we are told that Christ's Sacramental Body is not referred to space *ratione sui*, but only *ratione accidentis;* that it is not moved when the species are carried in procession; that we are not nearer to it at the altar than at the North Pole; we can only say that this "*ratione sui*" consideration does not concern us, nor is it any part of God's revelation. It does

well to remind us that our Lord's Body is not to be thought of carnally and grossly; that our natural imagination of this mystery is necessarily childish and inadequate. But it does not give us a more, but if anything, a less adequate conception of it. "This is My Body" is nearer the mark than metaphysics can ever hope to come; and of the two superstitions, that of the peasant who is too literally anthropomorphic, is less than that of the philosopher who should imagine his part of the truth to be the whole.

Again, what is called the Hidden Life of our Lord in the Sacrament, is a thought upon which the faith and devotion of many saints and holy persons has fed itself for centuries; yet it is one with which a narrow metaphysics plays havoc very disastrously. The notion of the loneliness, the sorrows, and disappointments of the neglected Prisoner of Love in the tabernacle may be crude and simple; but it is assuredly nearer the truth than the notion of a now passionless and apathetic Christ, who suffered these things by foresight two thousand years ago, and whose irrevocable pains cannot possibly be increased or lessened by any conduct of ours. I have more than once known all the joy and reality taken out of a life that fed on devotion to the Sacramental Presence, by such a

flash of theological illumination; and have seen Magdalens left weeping at empty tombs and crying: "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him."

There is perhaps a tendency in our miserable nature, to delight in disconcerting the minds of others by a display of rare and esoteric knowledge, especially of such knowledge as owes its rarity to its abstraction and its remoteness from the wholesome concrete reality of things, and which offers to minds more acute than deep, a quicker road to distinction than the laborious and humbling path of general education. But after all, destructive work does not demand much genius, nor does it need more than the merest smattering of bad logic and worse metaphysics, to be able to represent the beliefs of simple devotion in a ridiculous light, and to pull down in a moment what the labour of years cannot build up again. Even if vanity be not the motive, yet a well-meant but ill-judged desire to pluck up tares whose root-fibres are tangled with those of the wheat, will often issue in the same disaster.

This, of course, is not the use, but the abuse of theology; it is the result of a "little learning," which in unskilful hands, is the most dangerous of all weapons.

The first effect produced upon the believing mind

by departing from the childlike concrete presentment of Divine truth as put before us in revelation, is undoubtedly disconcerting and uncomfortable, like every other process of transition from one resting-place to another; and those who have not strength to carry the process through, are often injured spiritually by their inability either to go back to the older forms, or to go forward far enough to find anything as satisfying; and these are just the people who, in the spirit of the tailless fox, delight in communicating their unrest to others.

But a deeper and more comprehensive theology seems in most cases to bring us back to our original point of departure, albeit on a higher plane; to restore to us the stimulus of our childlike conceptions, not only fully, but superabundantly; and to convince us almost experimentally, that God's way of putting the truth was, after all, the better and the wiser.

What, for example, is the purport of the Incarnation, but to reveal to us the Father, so far as the Divine goodness can be expressed in the terms of a human life? to bring home to our imagination and emotion those truths about God's fatherhood and love, which are so unreal to us in their philosophic or theological garb? To say that love and sorrow, joy and anger, exist in God

eminenter, purified from their imperfections, identified with one another, is for us, and as far as any effectual idea is concerned, the same as telling us that they do not really exist in God at all. There is in Him, we are told, something that equals their perfection; but then, what that something is we do not and cannot know. But the Incarnation assures us that whatever consoles and helps us in our simpler anthropomorphic conception of God, is not more, but far less than the truth. As soon as the Divine love becomes capable of a human exhibition, as soon as it translates itself into mortal language, it is seen to be, *at least*, a suffering, grieving, passionate, pitiful love; we are shown that to practically deny these characteristics to the Eternal is a far greater error than to practically attribute them.

Even if, in some non-natural metaphysical sense, the Sacred Humanity suffers nothing in the sacramental state, yet what would such suffering avail except to reveal to us the transcendental suffering of the Divinity, and its yearning for men's souls? If the thirst of Calvary is over and gone, was not its chief end to assure us of the reality of the eternal thirst and passion of God which there found but a finite and halting utterance? "For the same thirst," says Mother

Julian[1] of Norwich, "that He had upon the rood-tree (which desire and longing and thirst, as to my sight, was in Him from without beginning), the same hath He yet, and shall have unto the time that the last soul that shall be saved is come up to His bliss. For as truly as there is a property in God of ruth and pity; as verily there is in God a property of thirst and longing." What does the revelation of Christ's human heart import except so far as it brings home, as it were, to our very senses, the truth that, Love is the core, the very central attribute of the Divinity round which all the other attributes cluster, from which they spring,

[1] Elsewhere, explaining that all contrition and holy sorrow in our soul is *from* God, and therefore must be more excellently *in* God, whose Spirit in us it is which *postulat pro nobis gemitibus inenarrabilibus* (Romans viii. 26), she writes: "He abideth us moaning and mourning. Which meaneth, that all the true feeling that we have in ourself in contrition and in compassion; and all moaning and mourning for that we are not united with our Lord, and such as is profitable—it is Christ, in us. And though some of us feel it seldom, it passeth never from Christ till what time He have brought us out of all our woe. For Love suffereth Him never to be without pity. And what time we fall into sin and leave the mind of Him and the keeping of our own soul, then beareth Christ alone all the charge of us. And thus standeth He moaning and mourning. . . . And that time I be strange to Him by sin, despair, or sloth, then I let my Lord stand alone, inasmuch as He is in me." (*Rev.* xvi.) All this is no mere concession to devout fancy, but a far nearer, though still defective, approach to the truth than the metaphysics of theology can pretend to arrive at.

on which they depend; that blood and water, guilt and remission, death and life, evil and good, darkness and light, both, stream from and return to the same fountain; both manifest one and the same goodness, and owe their seeming difference and colouring to the narrowness and imperfection of our weak faithless vision? And even if the Eucharist were no more than the bare remembrance of Calvary, it should speak to us principally not of that past human passion, but of the present Divine passion whereof Calvary was but the symbol. But in truth, a better conception of the unreality of time before the Divine mind, will convince us that the simple devotion which regards Christ's passion as continually present, as augmented by our sins, as alleviated by our love, is less inadequate and more philosophically true than the shallowly rationalistic view. For it is only the merciful fading of our memory that prevents our whole past being co-present to us. To Christ it is (and was from eternity) as though the nails were at this moment being driven through His hands.

Similarly with regard to all other pseudo-philosophic difficulties we have alluded to, we may say: *Lex orandi est lex credendi.* The saints have always prayed to a God, conceived human-wise, albeit with the consciousness of the imperfection

of even God's own self-chosen mode of revelation, and it is this consciousness that has saved them from superstition and anthropomorphism. We say "the saints," because purity of heart is the safeguard against superstition. It is the desire to "exploit" religion, to bribe the Almighty, to climb up by some other way, rather than go through the one door of self-denial, that is the source of all corruption.

The Christian revelation is not merely a symbol or creed, but it is a concrete religion left by Christ to His Church; it is perhaps in some sense more directly a *lex orandi* than a *lex credendi;* the creed is involved in the prayer, and has to be disentangled from it; and formularies are ever to be tested and explained by the concrete religion which they formulate. Not every devotion of Catholics is a Catholic devotion, and the Church needs to exercise her authority continually in checking the tendency to extravagate, and in applying and enforcing the original *lex orandi.* In this work she is helped by a wise and temperate theology. But theology is not always wise and temperate; and has itself often to be brought to the *lex orandi* test. It has to be reminded that, like science, its hypotheses, theories, and explanations, must square with facts —the facts here being the Christian religion as lived by its consistent professors. If certain forms of

prayer and devotion are undoubtedly Catholic, no theology that proves them unreal or ridiculous can be sound. If any analysis of the act of faith or of charity or of contrition, would make such acts seem exceedingly difficult to realize, we know at once the analysis must be faulty, since the simplest and most ignorant Catholics make such acts easily and abundantly. If any theology of grace or predestination or of the sacraments would make men pray less, or watch less, or struggle less; then we may be perfectly sure that such theology is wrong. Devotion and religion existed before theology, in the way that art existed before art-criticism; reasoning, before logic; speech, before grammar. Art-criticism, as far as it formulates and justifies the best work of the best artists, may dictate to and correct inferior workmen; and theology as far as it formulates and justifies the devotion of the best Catholics, and as far as it is true to the life of faith and charity as actually lived, so far is it a law and corrective for all. But where it begins to contradict the facts of that spiritual life, it loses its reality and its authority; and needs itself to be corrected by the *lex orandi*.

Nov. 1899.

XI.

WHAT IS MYSTICISM?

ALREADY some celebrity has been won by a little work of M. Henri Joly, entitled *Pyschologie des Saints*, belonging to a series of Saints' Lives published by Lecoffre of Paris. It may be considered as a sort of key to the somewhat more critical, and certainly not less helpful, method of interpreting hagiography which seems now to be coming into vogue to meet the peculiar needs of the *fin de siècle* Catholic.

The old time-honoured Saint's Life, with its emphasis on the miraculous and startling features of the portrait, its suppression of what was natural, ordinary, and therefore presumably uninteresting, and consequently its abandonment of all attempt to weave the human and divine into one truthful and harmonious whole, showing the gradual evolution of the perfect from the imperfect, to many minds makes no appeal whatever.

This is in some part to be ascribed to an advance in the art of biography in general, which

has accustomed those who read to expect, not such an exclusively laudatory treatment of character as is allowable in epitaphs, where the principle, *nil nisi bonum de mortuis*, is universally recognized; nor yet a series of interesting historical events threaded together by their connection with one and the same personage; but, as the word implies, the portrayal of a life, of a process; the record of the growth and unfolding of a soul and character. This it is which interests the subjective temper of our days, in which the unrestrained development of unlikeness and individualism makes us ever more curious to know if others think and feel as we do in the presence of so many strange problems. Besides, the older mind of these latter days finds more pleasure and peaceful interest in observing processes and verifying laws than in those abnormal deviations and paradoxes which afforded such keen interest to the younger mind of the past, with its insatiable appetite for the marvellous. Our mind has learnt that its choicest food need not be sought from afar, but lies scattered with the wild flowers by the wayside, and that nothing is so extraordinary as the ordinary. Thus we have come to care less for a full inventory of the events which make up a man's life, or for the striking nature of those events in themselves, than for such a judicious

selection and setting of them as shall best bring out and explain that individuality which is our main interest. We care less for what a man does, and more for what he is; and it is mainly as a key to what he is that we study the circumstances which act upon him, and the conduct by which he reacts upon them.

This riper and more distinct view of the scope of biography in general cannot but open our eyes to the need of an alteration in our methods of dealing with the lives of the Saints. And this all the more because a direct aim at moral utility, which would be at least inartistic in the ordinary biographer, is almost recognized as the leading motive in the work of portraying the Saints. The Church puts them before us, not merely that we may know them, but that knowing, we may follow them; whereas secular biography, whatever its practical effects, has no such practical purpose.

It may safely be asserted that the stimulating effect of example depends on two conditions: first, that the conduct in question should excite our admiration, for which end we must in some sort be able to understand and sympathize with it; secondly, that we should conceive it to be within our power to imitate it in some degree. We shall never exert ourselves for ends which we regard

as unintelligible, unattractive, or impossible. Thus ascetical feats which strike us only as marvellous or astounding by reason of their relative impossibility to us, excite our emulation as little as miracles do. They are doubtless evidences of the workings of Divine power in a frail nature like our own; but the *whence* and *whither* of the movement is too obscure to be helpful save in the most general way. To hear of prolonged fasts and formidable austerities; of rigorisms in conduct which, judged by ordinary rules of ethics, seem altogether *outré* and perhaps even slightly scandalous, can at best appeal to our sense of the marvellous, unless these seeming unknowables can be explained to us by something known; something which we recognize within ourselves, in however rudimentary a form, and which we can conceive expanding under certain circumstances to a like fulness.

To our fastidiousness, the bizarre ministrations of many Saints to the loathsome diseases of the sick is a difficulty of the same nature as walking on live coals. We marvel at it shudderingly, but we feel no beginnings within ourselves of so useless an accomplishment, until our attention is called to certain seeming extravagances and humiliations in which our own love of others naturally tends to express itself; and from which we can build up

some conception of the language spoken by a love indefinitely in excess of our own. Also the very same act which apart from its strangeness and difficulty is altogether unattractive as viewed in itself, becomes full of beauty when regarded in the light of the motives which have given birth to it, and whose expression it is.

It must also be confessed that we are but slightly stirred to grasp at what is only very remotely within our reach. The beginner in any art or science is not roused to emulation by the finished proficiency of the master, so much as by the slight superiority of those of his own standing. It is the "pace ahead" and not the "mile ahead" competitor who provokes the racer to a spurt; and it is often those who are very like ourselves, and yet in one way or another a little in front of us, who give new strength to our flagging energies, rather than the Saints who seem to be disappearing over the edge of our horizon. Certainly it is a common experience that, one receives at times greater moral stimulus from secular biography or even from fiction than from approved and authorized sources of spiritual edification; while it is almost universally true that Saints' lives help us only in proportion as their times and circumstances, their national and individual temperament, resemble our own. All

this points to the need of what we might call a more subjective treatment of Saints' lives than we have been accustomed to; and it is to this that the *Psychologie des Saints* addresses itself. We need less than formerly to be dazzled with the wonderful, and more to be drawn to the lovable. We want to be put *en rapport* with the Saints, to feel their humanity, to interpret it by our own, and thereby to realize that no miracle they ever wrought is comparable to the miracle of what they were.

A similar modification is needed and found in the presentment of the Gospel to minds at different stages of development. The Jews seek a sign, the Greeks wisdom, but the elect seek Christ Crucified; there are those who make Christ's miracles the test of His claims, and those who see a like evidence in the wisdom of His doctrine; and lastly, there are those who find all His miracles lost in insignificance beside the miracle of His love; all wisdom, folly, compared with the wisdom of the Cross; who value what He said and what He did, merely as throwing light on what He was and is. Written for all times and nations, the Gospels contain what will appeal to every stage of spiritual growth, and every form of culture; and if St. Mark speaks more directly to the sign-seekers, St. John makes his appeal straight to the discerning

heart. In a less reflex and more objective age than our own, apologetic dwelt wisely on the words and works of our Saviour; but now it aims rather at bringing home His entire personality to the mind and imagination, and thereby to the will and affections. It would certainly be a narrowness to distrust or repudiate every characteristic of the temper of our day simply because its formation has coincided with the growth of a non-Christian or even anti-Christian spirit; or to ignore, amidst all perversions and corruptions, a real and divinely-guided advance to better things in many matters. In the present it is sometimes hard to recognize what is of God's making, and what, of man's marring; but when that which is *ultra* and extravagant, and which God's hand has not planted, either works its own cure or withers away, those of after-times will look back and see solid gain where we fear loss. Thus a recent work (also from Lecoffre) undertakes, not without success, to show that from the chaos of conflicting philosophies which have sprung from the sixteenth century revolt, there has issued a happy delimitation of the lawful sphere of philosophy altogether helpful to Catholic truth.[1]

It is, therefore, needless to disguise from our-

[1] Maurice Blondel, *Les Exigences de la Pensée Contemporaine.*

selves the fact that in our intelligence of the Gospels and other Sacred Scriptures, as well as in our reading of history, we owe much, not indeed to the opponents of our religion as such, but to our age of which we and they alike are the children. And a like debt of frank acknowledgment will be due if our hagiography is made more intelligent, more interesting, more helpful, by being brought into line with the advance already noticed in secular biography.

One of the commonest misapprehensions by which the Saints are lifted hopelessly out of the reach of our intelligence and sympathy, is, as M. Joly points out, that by which mysticism is attributed to them as a peculiar possession from which other Christians are excluded. Moreover, mysticism itself, if not entirely misunderstood, is at least regarded as something vague and unintelligible, something akin to illusions and visions, things which no healthy and practical mind would care to meddle with. Victor Cousin regards it as the despair of an intellect which despises the fetters of cold reason and dreams of a direct face-to-face communion of the soul with God, in which the working of every faculty is stilled into absolute quiet. Others confound it with an Oriental contempt not only for everything material and natural, but even for all

desire and existence; thus giving a Buddhist interpretation to Christian asceticism. Many Christians and Catholics regard it as the rare prerogative of those few who, abandoning all active and social life, and every other form of intellectual culture, devote themselves to an arduous, unbroken contemplation of Divine things.

Against all these perversions M. Joly ventures to establish the simple definition: "Mysticism is the love of God;" and to draw the corollary: "Every Christian in the state of grace loves God, and is therefore more or less of a mystic;" but "the Saint is a man whose whole life is wrapped up and permeated with the love of God." In other words, the Saint differs from the ordinary Christian, not in his mysticism, but in the degree of his mysticism; the one loves God above all things, singly or collectively, and yet loves some other things not in reference to God; the other loves God alone, and nothing else except in reference to God. The difference is that between inceptive love and perfect love; between the seed and the flower. But because there is a real continuity and sameness of kind, the Saint is intelligible to us in that which is the very essence of his sanctity. All that is strange and unusual, all that impresses the imagination with a sense of unlikeness, is but secondary

and unessential—a matter of the language and expression of Divine love, determined largely by circumstances.

Certainly this simplification of the notion of mysticism will be distrusted by those who recognize that both by usage and etymology, "mysticism" and "mystery," are something akin; that if mysticism is not against reason, it is in some true sense above or beyond reason.

Yet, let them reflect for a moment, and see whether there is not much in the known workings of merely human affection and love, which is also in a true sense beyond reason; whether there are not sympathies and antipathies, nay, even telepathies, which are in a sense non-rational; whether there are not instincts and intuitions as sure and surer than the judgment of reason; and if this be so, need they wonder if in the commerce between God and the soul which He permeates, there should be much of which reason and common sense can give no very distinct account? If all love is mysticism; still more the love of God.[1]

[1] "As soon as we can give a reason for a feeling we are no longer under the spell of it; we appreciate, we weigh, we are free, at least in principle. . . . Once the mystery is gone, the power goes with it. Love must always seem to us indivisible, insoluble, superior to all analysis, if it is to preserve that appearance of infinity, of something supernatural and miraculous which is its chief beauty." (*Amiel's Journal.*)

Yet this truth will be coldly welcomed by those who, under pretext of solid piety, are somewhat anxious to keep mysticism at arm's length, and to distrust any movement of the soul which they cannot explain in a way thoroughly satisfactory to common sense. Unfortunately for their laudable aspirations there are psychological facts which stand in the way. If indeed the will and affections had no movement save that which is preceded and exactly measured by a previous apprehension, then we could manage our spiritual life with the mechanical regularity of a clock. But it is far otherwise, and for illustration of this somewhat neglected truth, we may turn to one who was as familiar with the psychology of the schools as with the psychology of the Saints. Dante writes of what he beheld in Paradise to the following effect:

> Things I beheld which to repeat again
> He who returns from thence, lacks power and skill;
> For as it nears the goal of its desires
> Our intellect engulfs itself so deep
> That halting memory helpless lags behind.[1]

[1] E vidi cose che redire
Ne sa nè puo qual di lassu discende;
Perchè appressando se al suo desire
Nostro intelletto si profunda tanto
Chè retro la memoria non puo ire. (*Par.* i.)

Again:

Here, I despair to tell
The love that sparkled in those sainted eyes;
Not only for my failing treacherous tongue,
But for the mind which cannot so return
Back on itself, save guided from on high.[1]

Again:

Upraising strains,
Since, from my memory, slipt and fallen away.[2]

Again:

As one who in his slumber dreams a dream
And waking feels as in his dream he felt,
Yet what he dreamt of, cannot call to mind,
So in my heart still lingers the sweet sense
Born of the vision which I then beheld,
Now wholly blotted out from memory's page.[3]

In these and many similar passages the poet insists on a point of psychology sufficiently familiar

[1] E quale io allor vidi
Negli occhi santi amor, qui l'abbandono;
Non perchè pur del mio parlar diffidi,
Ma per la mente, che non puo reddire
Sovra se tanto; s'altri non la guidi. (*Par.* xviii.)

[2] Comminciaron canti
Da mia memoria labili e caduci. (*Par.* xx.)

[3] Quale e colui chi sognando vede,
E dopo il sogno la passione impressa
Rimane, e l'altro alla mente non riede,
Cotal son io, chè quasi tutta cessa
Mia visione, e ancor mi distilla
Nel cor lo dolce che naque da essa.

to the experience of the mystics, and too often overlooked; namely, the different reach or compass of the three faculties of the soul: memory, will, and understanding. Rusbrock, with many another, constantly speaks as though love were an apprehensive faculty, revealing a presence and nearness of God to which the intellect is blind. In truth, this is but an elliptical form of expression; for all perception and affirmation is an act of the mind, not of the will and affections. What we have to notice is that although normally the affections are only excited by preceding knowledge which reveals to us the satisfying nature of the object of love; yet there is by no means a strict correspondence between the clearness of the foregoing perception and the force of following affection; and furthermore, there are blind instinctive movements of the will, no less than of the animal passions, which are wholly independent of our perceptions. There is at times all the effect of a keen perception, and yet no perception to account for it.

The permeation of the soul by God is, in our present state, a matter of inference (however immediate), and not of intuition. This inference can give birth to many acts of love and consoling confidence. But occasionally God seems to flood

the souls of the Saints with that joy which would properly follow a direct intuition of God within the soul, such as only the Blessed enjoy.[1] This is fairly expressed by saying that they *feel*, though they do not *behold*, the Divine presence. So far as from such a consolation they *infer* a special nearness of God, this inference is a natural act of the intellect, and will give birth to a self-caused, natural act of love. But the first act is properly an act of will alone; it is in no sense a perception. Here then we see that the reach of the heart is more extended than the reach of the mind; that it can penetrate to a depth of the soul, where light fails the intellect; that it can touch what the mind cannot see. These sudden glows are impossible to reproduce, for the simple reason that though memory may retain its idea of the resulting impression (for acts of will have their idea, as much as simple sense impressions), yet it has no idea of the excitant cause. Even when the cause of some will-act is remembered, it will not always

[1] "It is of God our Lord alone to give joy to the soul without any cause preceding; for it is her Creator's prerogative to go in and out and to stir up within her that movement by which she is wholly drawn to the love of His Divine Majesty. I say, without any cause, *i.e.*, without any foregoing emotion or the apprehension of any object from which such joy could arise through her own acts of understanding and will." (St. Ignatius of Loyola.)

be effectual in re-exciting the former affection; or the same degree of affection—so loose is the dependence between these two parts of the soul.

Again, there is an often unobserved difference of reach between two distinct acts of the mind itself. In the instant before an object is cognized or recognized by simple apprehension, and before thought has come to work upon it, it is the object of a certain mental touch preparatory to the act of intelligence. Or at most it is cognized as *something*, obscurely and indistinctly. If, as often happens, the object in any way exceeds our faculty, so far the activity of the mind stays at this touch, and does not assimilate itself to the object or penetrate it as a key penetrates the wards of the lock and explores its secret structure. Thus there are two kinds of vision or intuition, that which touches and that which penetrates. Or rather three, for the penetration may be partial, or perfect. If perfect, then the vision is comprehensive. Plainly the things we perfectly comprehend are few, if any. No created intellect can ever comprehend God, though the Blessed gaze upon Him with varying degrees of intuitive penetration. The mystics seem to think that, without any sort of intuitive penetration, the mind at times is brought into simple contact with God in such a way

that no idea or mark is made upon the mind, for the mind can in no way apprehend God. We touch the smooth sphere of the infinite, but we cannot lay hold of it. Such experiences as these may indeed leave some confused trace in the memory. St. Teresa seems frequently to have thus felt God with the finger-tips of the mind, by an act which was distinctly perceptive and not merely affective. It appears, then, that this "tactual intuition" has a longer reach than apprehensive and penetrating intuition. We can just touch many things not within our grasp.

Here the mystics seem to come into conflict, not so much with theology, which denies to the Saints on earth all direct intuition of the Divine substance in the sense of mental penetration or grasp, as with the scholastic psychology, which leaves no room for what we have endeavoured to describe as "tactual intuition"—something less than face-to-face vision; something more than the quickest inference, a sort of coming behind and touching the hem of God's garment. But it must be confessed that the mystics have in many respects a psychology of their own, difficult to disentangle from the necessarily figurative language in which it is wrapped.

That memory fails to follow intelligence in its deeper and quicker plunges is matter of common

experience. We make a thousand subtle and complex inferences with the most infallible certainty, of which we can give no satisfactory account, for the simple reason that the movements of the mind are individually too rapid and slight to have time or force to sink into the memory. If we want to remember, we repeat and linger over the experience in question; but in these concrete and complex inferences the activity of the mind is as multitudinous and electric as when movement of translation turns into molecular vibration. As far as the record of memory goes, the mind seems to have been motionless in its moments of most fruitful energizing. The results may be easily mistaken for Heaven-sent inspirations.

At other times we remember indeed that there has been a flash of inner light revealing some new unity, connection, or relation. Brilliant and rapid as lightning, it has left us in our former darkness before memory could snatch the thought and secure it. Or lastly, as the poet teaches, it may be that our intellectual energy is so taxed and absorbed by the immensity and brilliancy of its object, that memory, with the other faculties, is paralyzed and helpless; and that the Saint descends from the third heaven with his heart still aglow, but his memory all blank.

In general, it is not an unreasonable speculation to suggest that, as in individual acts the energy exerted by one of these faculties is borrowed from the others, so they who habitually exercise one more than another, induce some kind of disproportion in the soul. We have those who are prodigies of memory, but whose understanding is less than mediocre; those who are brilliantly intellectual, but feeble of purpose and cold in affection; and so on.

When the disciples spoke with the risen Christ on the road to Emmaus, we are told that their eyes were held so that they did not know Him; and also that at the same time their hearts burned within them. This "holding of the eyes" suggests a subjective effect in their minds rather than any change or disguise in our Saviour's appearance. Also, we are told "that their eyes were opened and they knew Him with breaking of bread." Plainly their bodily vision was not falsified in any way, but rather their power of *re*-cognition was bound by some spell. The internal picture of Christ as they had known Him was not evoked by His presence according to the ordinary law of associated images, but lay dormant in memory's recesses; and they looked upon His face as it were for the first time: "Art Thou then a stranger in Jerusalem?" We

know what it is for a face, at first strange, to "come back to us." For there are gradual recognitions as well as instantaneous. But when He took bread, and blessed, and brake and gave to them, then the whole picture of the Last Supper, and of the face of Christ with uplifted eyes and hands, rushed back into their memory, and ere He could vanish and escape comparison they had recognized Him. Yet even as He spake with them they felt the love that His converse of old had kindled in their hearts; affection had in its own blind way already recognized and embraced the Beloved. "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Sion, then were we as them that dreamed." They were as those who wake filled with the joy of a forgotten dream.

Thus explained, the mysticism of the Saints does not shut them out into an unknown region, but reduces them at once to the category of the known. If love be mysticism, then we have the key to all mysticism within ourselves. The phenomena of the mind which we have just been examining are after all quite familiar to our own experience; and they are precisely those which, when clothed in the technical language of St. John of the Cross, seem to belong to another order of spiritual being wholly out of touch with our own. Doubtless a more

accurate study of ourselves, as well as a more accurate study of the Saints, is needed to bridge over this seemingly impassable gulf fixed between their life and ours.

By the development of this one point we have tried to indicate the general method by which what at first sight is strange in the Saints may be shown to be kindred to something in ourselves; so that the work of the hagiographer is *de chercher en quelque sort experimentalement comment se développe et vit l'âme du Saint dans ce qu'elle a conservé de semblable à la nôtre.*[1]

Dec. 1897.

[1] P. 43.

XII.

THE TRUE AND THE FALSE MYSTICISM.

I.

THE eternal unchanging life of the soul, both here and hereafter, consists in an action which may be described almost indifferently as "contemplative love" or as "loving contemplation." It lies in apprehending and gazing fixedly on God as the Source and Sum of all goodness and excellence. It therefore includes and surpasses the exercise of every special and particular virtue; for of these, each is a strong love and admiration for some partial phase of the Divine Goodness—for God as manifested in Justice, or in Mercy, or in Purity, or in Meekness. But Eternal Life, or Divine Charity, is the indiscriminate love of universal goodness as realized in God; it is a delight in the contemplation of God, whether as imaged in an idea which our mind has formed of Him, or as seen in His very Substance, face to face. And as a particular virtue, say Chastity, is not merely a delighting in the bare conception and thought of purity, but a delight in

its realization wherever found, a sincere desire for its realization where it is wanting; so it is not in the mere abstract idea of God that Divine Charity rejoices, but in the belief or the experience of His concrete existence. It wants God to *be*. All these virtues, or partial loves, loves of things "divine by participation," of mere reflections and glimpses of divinity, are valuable solely as leading up to the full love of the Absolute Goodness in itself, a love which is its own *raison d'être*, since there is nothing higher which it can minister to or grow into.

"Contemplation," in the more ancient sense of the word, does not, as with St. Ignatius Loyola and later writers, mean gazing upon some concrete incident or example in order to draw some practical fruit therefrom, this fruit being the end, and contemplation only the means; but it stands for an action which is an end in itself, the highest kind of action whereof the soul is capable, and to the production of which all our other spiritual efforts and prayers are directed. And if we understand what Love is, we shall see that the fruit of this loosely-styled "contemplation" is itself Contemplation in the stricter mystical sense of the term: that here we are led by "practical contemplation" up to an act of "theoria" or "speculative contemplation." For Love itself is a contemplative act—

complacentia boni—a gazing with delight upon the Fair and True: the mind's embrace of that which is its food and eternal life.

It is neither necessary nor possible nor desirable that we should in this life be continually exercising conscious acts of the love of God,—whether successive ejaculatory acts or those sustained ecstatic acts proper to mystic contemplation. It suffices that all the internal free movements of our soul be governed and checked by an habitual, deep-down, unconscious love of God, which from time to time is awakened into consciousness by the inspiration of some stimulating thought, or by the immediate working of God upon the heart, which He holds in His hands. Still in the measure that the secret root is more widespread and vigorous, will it send up more frequent shoots as evidences of its vitality; while in return it derives an increase of energy from every expanding frond that breathes in the purifying air. The stronger love will break upward into consciousness more readily, with slighter provocation, through greater resistances and difficulties; and in return, every conscious act of love will, according to its intensity, its endurance, and its intelligence, strengthen the grip of love upon the soul.

If then the love of God is the end of man; if

man is here on earth but to be schooled in that art which he is to exercise hereafter in one eternal unbroken act, all that disposes and leads the soul to multiplied, sustained, and intelligent acts of love and foretastes of heaven is of supreme importance, not only for the professed contemplative, but for every Christian who has a soul to save. For though the contemplative is one who by natural aptitude and divine vocation is set apart to sit at the feet of Christ and gaze up into His face in adoring silence, while Martha serves Him, solicitous about many things, yet the specialization is not so rigorous as that Mary's prayer shall not be at times broken for needful toil, and Martha's labours be interspersed with moments of rest and spiritual refreshment. And though the Church in Heaven has entered into that better part which shall not be taken from her, yet the Church on earth, amid warfare and toil, has but odd moments of meditative repose; and of her multitudinous and varied members only a few can be set apart specially in the interest of the rest, to keep the lamp of contemplative love ever burning in the sanctuary.

Thought and labour, idea and energy—by these two, human life is governed. In point of quantity and of time occupied, thought and reflection represent a small fraction of the lives of most men, the

rest being devoted to the active prosecution of the programme they have set before themselves. Similarly in that specialization needful in any community or association of men, those who embrace the life of thought, study, and contemplation bear, and ought to bear, a correspondingly small proportion to those engaged in a life of external activity. But as these two lives are properly but factors of the whole life of man, as they depend upon one another and run into one another, they cannot be absolutely separated without mutual hurt. Thought is fed, stimulated, and checked by action; and action is guided, inspired, and spiritualized by thought. Specialization therefore cannot be absolute, but must be limited by the recognition of this fact.

The active and the contemplative life are both lives of unbroken love; but the former is made up mainly of actions governed by and springing from love, though not in themselves conscious acts of love; whereas the latter makes these conscious acts of love its direct and principal aim. If the contemplative works or studies or rests, it is with a view to the bettering of his prayer; if the man of action prays and contemplates, it is with a view to the bettering and supernaturalizing of his work. Much harm has come from not recognizing that activity

and contemplation must mingle in every Christian life: and that it is only as denoting which element is dominant and to the fore that the terms "active" and "contemplative" are used. A life of mere activity in good works soon defeats its original purpose; the spirit is choked and starved: God fades from consciousness, and self slowly creeps in, unless from time to time the soul rises to the surface to breathe the upper air which purifies and reinvigorates its exhausted system. On the other hand, he who would deny himself every other form of activity, internal or external, save the contemplation of God, would thereby weaken and impoverish those very faculties in the exercise of which prayer consists. For the more material his mind has to work upon, and the more power and skill he brings to the task of piecing together an ever fuller image of God from the fragments of Divinity scattered among creatures, the easier and more fruitful will his prayer become. He must be as the bee, alternating between its cell and the flower-world outside; now industriously amassing new matter, now building up what it has amassed; often abroad, yet only that its home hours may be more fruitful.

Inasmuch then as the contemplative does more continuously, intensely, and perfectly only what all

servants of God do from time to time in brief liftings-up of the heart and mind to God, it will be for the profit of all to consider a little more closely the nature of contemplation in the stricter or mystical sense; to point out some of its conditions, and to remove a few popular misapprehensions on the subject.

The term "mysticism" has undoubtedly come into bad odour with thinkers of a certain class, owing to its association with the delusions of visionaries and the extravagances not only of gnostics and Neo-Platonists but of many Christian mystics who, misled by a resemblance in terminology and statement, as well as in practice and discipline, between the false and the true, have failed to observe a difference of infinite moment in principle and substance, and have striven to mingle into one system elements as uncongenial as oil and water. Against extravagances such as these, common sense has justly risen up in arms, while philistinism has found in them a pretext for making a clean sweep of everything that would seem to raise religion above the apprehension and criticism of the ordinary man of business. For many, mysticism means simply an abandonment of all attempt to reconcile the "religious sentiment" with

intelligent thought, a deliberate yielding one's self a prey to any unchecked and unverifiable fancy or speculation which seems to interpret the vague yearnings of the soul after God. Or it suggests a morbid quietism effected by a complete deadening of the affections and stupefaction of the mind. Or at best it stands for the exalted state of a few souls who have attained to a habit of preternatural union with God, and as such, is in their opinion, a matter of no practical interest to the ordinary Christian.

Perhaps one of the strangest misapprehensions is that which identifies "mysticism" with that "subjectivism" in religion which is distinctive of the Protestant spirit. It is commonly assumed by Protestants that the mediatorial principle of Catholicism is asserted not only in the definition of dogmatic truths by public authority to which private judgment must submit; not only in the determining of those matters of conduct which fall under the positive discipline of the Church; not only in the communication of certain special and superabundant graces through sacramental channels; not only in making communion with the Church to be a condition of union with God; not only in encouraging the soul to approach God, as one member of a Body, through the intercession

of Christ and the saints; but also in that mediation is pressed to such an extent as to forbid the soul either to speak to God directly in prayer or to receive from God, and through conscience, any light or direction which it may obey without sanction of the Church. Hence, in every mystic of the Middle Age they at once hail a harbinger of Luther. So superficial a travesty were scarce worth mention, were it not that some Protestants have so persistently claimed mysticism as their own, that they have bred a distrust of it in less well-informed Catholics. Surely a moderate acquaintance with Catholic piety ought to suffice to show that the whole end and aim to which the Church, her dogma, her ordinances, are ostensibly and theoretically directed is divine love and mystic converse between God and the soul.

Social life rightly organized is not hurtful but helpful to the fuller development of individual life. We are at first educated somewhat passively in those arts and sciences which are the common possession of the society into which we are born, that, profiting by this gathered and tested lore, we may begin for ourselves where others have left off, and thus render interest for the capital put at our service. Had we to begin *ab ovo* for ourselves, our acquisitions would be gloriously our

own, but how slight, how unreliable! Similarly the Church forms our mind and our conscience in regard to those truths which have been committed to her by revelation, or which have been drawn from revelation by the divinely-guided reflection of her saints and doctors; but while it would be presumption to expect private and internal guidance from God in matters where He has so liberally provided for our instruction in a public manner, yet it is obvious that the application of all this truth to our own individual needs, the form into which it must be moulded before it can become vital for each particular soul, the fitting of general principles of conduct to particular cases whereof no two are ever quite alike, and whose internal complexity can never be fully submitted to any external mind,—all this has to be settled between the soul and God alone, in the last resort. All that the Church's direction does is to stimulate and facilitate this internal converse, and to safeguard it from the illusions and extravagances to which mysticism invariably leads when it discards the counsel of the Church and despises the gathered wisdom and experience of the people of God. It is not in going straight to God and in learning straight from God that Protestantism offends, but in doing so where God has already abundantly

provided for those needs of ours which are common to the whole Christian body, and in respect to which He treats immediately with that body as a whole, dealing individually only with individual needs.

But though the term "mysticism" has come to be reserved to a degree of divine love which is usually accompanied with ecstasy and other supernormal phenomena, yet the substance of "mysticism" is that love of God without which no soul can put forth the blossom of its highest perfection and salvation. All love is mystical in that it refuses the exact analysis of reason which, without contradicting, it ineffably transcends; still more must the union between the Creator and the created soul be of a nature dimly apprehensible; something to be felt rather than said; something infinitely unlike a contract of "give and take," or "do and take," which may be set down in terms sufficiently exact.

This ineffable union is not the privilege of a few elect souls, but an obligation binding upon all. Every other form of prayer and spiritual exercise is directed to this as its end, to these brief contemplative elevations which are commonly called "acts" of divine love. The "mystic" is one with whom such acts are more frequent, sustained, and

intense, who makes the eliciting of such explicit "acts" the main business of life—which, for others, not specially called, it need not be. For these a life of implicit love suffices.

Whatever, therefore, conduces to the contemplative habit of soul is of practical use, not only to the professed contemplative, but to every Christian who has a soul to save; and undoubtedly some of the obscurities that commonly surround the subject of mysticism make their influence felt as effectually in the spiritual life of the faithful at large as in the cloister.

In the course of the Church's life the pendulum swings now to one side, now to another, of the golden mean in respect to mysticism, yet at each vibration less wide of the mark. At present we are certainly suffering from a reaction in the direction of rationalism which tends to dry up the springs of tenderer devotion, and through a laudable insistence on the need of solid practical piety to distrust any movement of the soul which cannot be dissected and defended satisfactorily. In protest against Protestantism, with its principle of the self-sufficingness of each soul, and its independence of all mediation in relation to God, the Church's whole emphasis has in these centuries been laid not on the use but on the abuse of

mysticism, and the faithful following suit have become timid in respect to any mode of prayer that cannot be formulated and submitted to authority for inspection and approval. Even though mental prayer is much insisted on and preferred, and the "acts" of the will and affections are assigned as its chief fruit, yet we find that these same "acts" of the will are themselves subordinated to what are called "practical" resolutions, as it were, with a latent insinuation that a mere "act" of contemplative love could not be a worthy end in itself, apart from all bearing on external life; still less could it be the sovereign end of all prayer and all life.

Yet those who understand our times are not perhaps wrong when they say that if the Church is ever to get hold of the men of good-will outside her pale, it will be through the satisfaction she offers to the ineradicable mystical appetite of the human soul, which rationalism starves but cannot kill. Urgent as it is that she should show her "practicalism," her public utility, her sympathy with the best and truest civilization, her sense of the continuity between the natural and supernatural; yet it is no less urgent that she should show herself to be the heavenly Rachel, the Mother of Contemplative Love, acknowledging the value

of Martha's ministrations, yet holding Mary's to be the better part. For even now the stifled soul of our "practical" generation is beginning to cry out: "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"—and to realize that man cannot live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God.

Eternal Life is a life of knowledge; it consists in knowing. "This is life eternal, that they should know Thee, the only true God." It is called "eternal," whether because it is the life or vital exercise of man's eternal part, that highest element of his being whereby he is rooted in the timeless world, stretching into this world of appearances and changes only in virtue of his bodily organism, as it might be an overhanging willow laving its locks in the passing stream; or else, because it is the life of the Eternal One, to a participation whereof the rational creature is destined by grace, and, in some more analogous way, by nature.

We might have expected to be told that Eternal Life lay in the love rather than in the knowledge of God; for here men may know God and yet not love Him or share in the divine life. But this is only because they have not learnt that the best and highest life consists in a full knowledge of

the Best, and because their other appetites and desires have not been brought under obedience to the appetite of the mind, which should rule over all. The appetite of the mind is for Truth; not for abstract truths, principles, propositions; not for syntheses and analyses; not for investigations, discussions, and arguments; not for histories and accumulations of experience; not for all or any of these things in themselves, and for their own sakes, but only in so far as they bring the mind ever nearer to that all-satisfying, restful vision of the Entire Truth, of that Simple Unity and Fulness of concrete Being whereof these are but hints and distant rumours. If every new simplification of knowledge by which the incoherent many is seen to be one and connected, delights the mind and gives it a moment of ecstatic rest; if every addition to our store of experience at once wakes the consciousness of a void and fills it, it is evident that the mind has an ineradicable craving for some vision in which the totality of truth shall be summed up in the most absolute simplicity and unity of being.

But without for a moment lending countenance to the Platonic doctrine of "reminiscence," which simply evades the question as to the origination of our knowledge by pushing it back into the region of

antenatal darkness, we need not hesitate to recognize the truth that, in some sense, all experience and teaching but wakes us to a consciousness of our spiritual self. The soul can know and love only what fits into it, what "agrees" with it, what it can accommodate itself to. For the soul is, in the subjective order, the transcending equivalent of all that meets it as the object of its knowledge and love. In its simple spiritual substance is wrapt up whatever perfection it can comprehend and appreciate in the things presented to its consideration. In revealing to us, day by day, our latent capacities of knowing and loving, life reveals us to ourselves, so that the knowledge of Self and Not-Self go hand in hand. Yet what delights us without is divided and imperfect; what delights us within is united and perfect. In this way the spirit is the microcosm, a pure white light unaware of its own beauty till it sees it scattered into its components by the prism of creation. Still it is not ultimately to the scattered truth, but to truth in its source, to the simple truth, that mind is drawn. As atom to atom, so spirit is attracted to spirit, and mind to mind. It is only as being the shadowings of mind that truth, and beauty, and goodness, and order attract us with an attraction borrowed from that mind, created or uncreated, of which they are the expression and manifestation.

What the mind really, though often unconsciously, craves for is the vision of the Eternal Mind, which alone can evoke and fill to infinite overflowing its utmost capacities of knowing and loving, and thereby fully reveal it to itself: "*In lumine tuo videbimus lumen*," as the mystics say.

Divine love is simply the tendency or appetite of the created mind towards the Eternal Mind, seeking union with it by vision so far as it is separated from it; or else, resting in the fruition of that union so far as it has been realized: "*Satiabor cum apparuerit gloria tua*—When Thy glory shall shine out I shall be satisfied."

If, therefore, we speak of that vital exercise of the soul's eternal part in which it reaches its highest and best, then Eternal Life undoubtedly lies in gazing upon God's Face; but inasmuch as this vision fills the soul with joy because she is at rest and has found Him whom she sought, and has embraced Him never to let Him go, Eternal Life may in virtue of this, its inseparable accompaniment, be said to consist in the Love of God. The healthy energizing of the body gives delight; yet this delight is not life, but a result of the consciousness of life. Therefore, with Augustine we may pronounce blessedness to be: *Gaudium de Veritate*,—Joy at beholding Him who is the Truth; yet the ener-

gizing which gives birth to this delight is not of the will and affections, but of the mind; it is an act of contemplation; and the life of God Himself, as necessarily conceived by us, not in its simplicity, but as woven of elements, is a life of contemplation by "essence," and of love by "concomitance." As the good and God-like rejoice disinterestedly when, and wherever they see the realization of justice, and truth, and beauty; and as the Blessed in Heaven rejoice because they see God, so God rejoices (we cannot but think) because He sees Himself; and He has created us to enter into that joy. In all cases, however, the theme of joy is, not that God or Goodness is *seen*, but that God *is*, though till we *see* that He is, our joy is not full.

The distinction of contemplation in the strict sense, as opposed to meditation, is that it is an unprogressive act of the mind, involving no process or discourse or change. Its duration may be measured by its coexistence with time and movement; but in itself it is a timeless eternal act; not more because it is longer, nor less because it is shorter. What I see I see; and if I see it clearly and all at a glance, I do not see it more for seeing it longer. In some sense bodily vision is an unprogressive act; mental vision is wholly so in itself, though it may depend on material

conditions for its expression and embodiment in the imagination.

That blessedness, that the very fulness of the highest life should be realized in an unprogressive, timeless act, such as we have asserted contemplation to be, is a conception very hostile to that modern philosophy which regards life and action as consisting essentially in movement; which cannot imagine "Eternal Rest" to be anything but the negation of all consciousness and activity; and which can dream of no more excellent beatitude than that of an everlasting "getting on" towards an unreachable goal, a perpetuation of the process of evolution and struggle in the midst of which we are now living. "We are making," says Mr. F. W. H. Myers,[1] "as safe a deduction from world-wide analogy as man can ever make regarding things thus unknown, when we assume that spiritual evolution will follow the same laws as physical evolution, that there will be no discontinuity between terrene and post-terrene bliss or virtue, and that the next life, like this, . . . will find its best delight in the possibility of progress, not attainable without effort so strenuous as may well resemble pain."

It cannot be denied that kindly Nature lends a sweetness to labour itself which comes to be sought

[1] *Science and a Future Life.*

for its own sake irrespective of the end to which it is directed. But closer thought will prove this pleasure to be borrowed from, and dependent upon, that which is anticipated in the attainment of the desired result. For what delights us in toil is really the intervals of brief fruitional action which alternate with and relieve periods of strain and effort. Either difficulties which stand between us and our final aim are, one after another, conquered; or else in the very process we begin partially to enjoy what we hope for in its fulness. In neither case is effort and pain desired for its own sake, but only for the sake of the moments of pleasurable energizing with which it is interspersed, or for the accompanying sense of attainment and of labour already accomplished, or for the *prospect* of being able to look back on ground covered and ambitions realized. The love of home lends joy to every step of our homeward journey, even in the strangest and unfriendliest solitude, where no part of that final joy exists, save only in hope; and every sum we lay by towards a fortune yields us pleasure not merely as bringing us nearer to our goal, but as being absolutely in itself a partial entering into our desire.

Look at it how we will, closely as joy is interwoven with pain and effort, yet its cause is always and everywhere the consciousness of good realized,

of rest attained, of labour ended, of appetite satisfied, of enquiry answered, either in fact or in hope. Who would ever toil at self-evident impossibilities? Men sometimes go through labours with the certainty of *final* failure; but then on the way much is accomplished, and each particular effort meets its particular success. But no man for mere love of toil would spend his day trying to push a mountain into the sea.

What lends plausibility to the notion that there is no ultimate satisfaction or rest is that each particular step towards final attainment tends so completely to occupy our desires and divert our attention from its partial and dependent character, that for the time it seems as though our whole happiness lay in this one thing. Thus a man in pursuit of literary or social honours and degrees says and believes time after time: "Could I only arrive at this or that point I should be content;" or if his reason corrects the illusion, still his imagination and emotions are dominated by it. But when he has secured his point, he finds after a momentary fruition that he is as far as ever from plenary satisfaction; and often that it has but served to wake him to a consciousness of new wants.

Our thirst is insatiable, so that we must always be drinking. Yet the pleasure is not in the craving,

but in the cure of that craving; the two processes running on side by side. In a word, so closely are effort and satisfaction twisted together in our present life that we can with difficulty conceive them separate, even if we distinguish them at all.

It may perhaps be urged that joy depends always on a certain shock of transition from pain to rest, or from rest to betterment; that it dies away as we grow used to the new state; and therefore it can only be sustained by a series of alternating wants and reliefs. There is truth in this, though with defect. Joy rises from the consciousness of good possessed, and good is that which fills some void, whether a void of which we were previously aware, as when pain is relieved and appetite stayed, or a void which we knew not till the same act which filled it revealed it to us, as when we experience some new pleasure undreamt of before. Why does joy die away except because our attention, our consciousness, is slowly dissipated and withdrawn from what it was wholly concentrated upon in the first moment of fruition, from the sense of that particular want which imperiously obtruded itself as of paramount and exclusive importance, and from the sense of its satisfaction which the bias of appetite represented to us as of altogether exaggerated consequence? Could

we maintain and perpetuate the illusion of that moment; could we save that experience in all its vivid reality, and not suffer it to be numbered among the receding shadows of memory; could we by contemplative effort preclude the consciousness of those other countless voids whose cry becomes audible when once that more clamorous voice is hushed, then indeed our joy would not fade. In fine, joy does not essentially depend on transition and novelty; nor is it killed by mere endurance; but it depends on the consciousness of void filled, or, more strictly, on the consciousness that "it is well with us." It is because this consciousness fades, for the reasons just given, that our joy also fades. If then there were any power within us or without us which could seize and, as it were, petrify the soul in any such moment of fruition; which could so tie its consciousness down to that one want and its satisfaction as to prevent any other simultaneous want distracting our attention, and to forbid any succession of subsequent experiences pushing themselves between the mind and that particular moment, and making a dense cloud for memory to pierce through, such a power could secure us unfading joy without any need of variety, or progress, or novelty—a timeless, an eternal joy. Such is the Joy of God in the

unfading consciousness of His infinite fulness of Being; such is the joy of the Blessed in their unfading consciousness of the fullest realization of their capacity of knowing and loving; such, too, is the joy of which contemplation secures brief snatches to the saints on earth when it so fixes the spellbound mind on the thought of God that, while the fascination lasts, time and the things of time go for nothing, being non-existent for consciousness. Indeed this will not be incredible to any reflective mind observant of its own states, and remembering many an instance where the intensity of an experience has rapt the soul out of itself, absorbing all consciousness of time and of everything else, interior and exterior. Brief "ecstasies" of this sort are common and normal, nor do they differ from those of the mystic, save as to their object, frequency, and duration. A sudden fright, or joy, will in some sense paralyze the rest of the soul by calling its energies to one point; but at that point all is energy and activity, though without movement or progress; there is no "discourse" or passing of the mind from part to part of its object, but simple rest in it. Not indeed that the object contemplated is of necessity simple and partless, but that at least all its parts are taken together as one, in one still gaze. If our

eye travels over the details one by one, viewing them singly and in relation one to another, yet this process of analysis must have an end somewhere; these parts, or else the parts of these parts, must each be simply contemplated in turn without further "discourse;" and then the very end of all this dissection and examination is synthesis, a putting together of the whole in order to gaze on it and so enter into the quiet fruition of one's labour.

Lastly, it may be objected that the very notions of rest and of action are repugnant one to another. But this is to forget that our senses and outward experience reveal to us not action, but simply the effects of action; those movements and phenomenal sequences of whose originating and active cause we can form no pictorial image whatever. We are almost constrained to consider action which is the cause of movement as being itself some mysterious kind of movement, and to give the name of action to any movement which precedes and conditions an effect. The very words "attraction," "repulsion," and the like suggest a picture of one body connected with another, and the two thus welded into one, receiving a common motion of local change. But of real causality we can form no picture whatever, though our own acts of volition make it conceivable for us by a sort

of analogy. Roughly we consider the engine as acting on the train it draws after it; but strictly and in truth we only see the engine being passively moved, and with it the train to which it is rigidly attached. All the action here is of forces of cohesion and expansion; that is, of hypothetical agencies of whose nature and operation we can only speak in terms of the effects produced, or in terms of the only action of which we have direct experience, the action of our own mind and will. But it is just here that we see clearly how action differs from the effects or the conditions of action precisely in its stillness and steadfastness.

II.

The object of mystical contemplation of whatever degree, from the ordinary Christian's simple act of love to the ecstasies of the saints, is God—God as He reveals Himself in His action upon the soul, whether acting immediately as First Cause, or mediately through His creatures. To know God in Himself, that is, in His substance, apart from His effects; not merely to know Him as the Source and Cause of the affections He produces in our mind and heart, but to know what He is in Himself in the same way that we know His effects, and as though He Himself were an effect, is really a contradictory

notion; yet the expression covers the mystery of that union of the beatified spirit with God in Himself, which we call knowledge or vision simply by analogy and for want of any other term, even as we speak of mind-knowledge in terms of bodily sight. But on earth, God can be contemplated only as the hidden source of His works, even as the soul only knows herself by her manifestations, her actions and reactions, but in no wise in her substance and inner perfection. And the manner in which we advance in the truer knowledge and love of our own soul, and acquire a certain laudable habit of self-contemplation, is not only illustrative of, but very intimately connected with, a like advance in the contemplative love of God. For, indeed, the soul is the mirror wherein, according as its capacities are more and more unfolded and realized, we see the fullest finite revelation of God. We cannot understand any personality except so far as by a sort of dramatic power we can take it upon ourselves, clothe ourselves with it, and in our imagination put ourselves into that other's place and mood and condition. We may, indeed, conceive a notion of goodness and excellence far beyond our own by, as it were, multiplying and purifying that of which we are conscious in ourselves; but we cannot imaginatively realize such a notional conception, except so

far as we are at least remotely capable of attaining to it ourselves. Whatever be the multiplier—finite, or infinite—self is, after all, our highest unit of perfection. We cannot *realize* anything better than what we know ourselves to be in ideal and capacity, and it is on our *realization*, not upon our abstract notion, of God's perfection that our love of Him depends.

Day by day we advance from imperfect to more perfect self-consciousness and sense of individuality in proportion as the latent activities of our soul are called into fuller and more varied play and slowly revealed to us. We find out by degrees what we can do, what we can know, what we can love, and what therefore we ourselves must *be* who can fit and be fitted to, who can comprehend and pass beyond all these objects of thought and love and action. We *are* in the moral order what we love; we cleave to our like; atom to atom, and thought to thought. To love justice is to be just; to love chastity is to be chaste. Is not the poet's love of Nature an index of a fair soul, even if we do not go so far as to say that he imparts that beauty to Nature from his own soul? Whatever delights us, *that* we are—if not effectually, at least in aspiration; we find it all within ourselves, or else something which answers to it and surpasses it.

Yet though derived from an infinite variety of manifestations, the notion we have of "self" from first to last is pure and simple, albeit ever growing in richness and depth of colour. It is not a jumble or heaping together of all our self-experiences, though every one of them has contributed to its making. It is not the effect of a confused view of all our remembered acts of knowledge and love and effort, such a conglomeration as the sense-school would have us think it. It is rather a simple impression which remains after its innumerable causes have vanished from existence and from memory, and which can be resuscitated in their absence. Our gratitude towards a persistent benefactor is created by the sum of his favours, but is in itself a simple sentiment which endures when the favours are out of sight and even largely forgotten in detail. So as to our sentiment towards self, and our notion of self. The more we get from ourselves in the way of intelligence and love and goodness, the clearer and deeper is our notion, the fuller and richer is our love of that hidden source, that self from which all this proceeds. What we know and what we love is not any or all of these manifestations, but that simple unit which is manifested. Thus, as the word "mother," standing always for the same simple personality, means indefinitely less

for the wailing infant than for the grown son who crowds into it the sentiment generated by years of affectionate intercourse; so the "I" of dawning consciousness differs in volume of meaning, from the "I" of mature years.

> But as he grows, he gathers much,
> And learns the use of "I" and "me,"
> That "I" am not the things I see
> And other than the things I touch.

And the more he sees and touches and opposes to himself as "other" and "not-self," the fuller and deeper is his consciousness of both what is included and what is excluded by this same "I."

Now as from the continual study of the works of an author whom we have never seen, a certain simple idea of his personality shapes itself in our mind, derived but distinct from the ideas of his various productions, so from repeated meditations upon God's works and ways and revelations, a similarly simple and concrete impression of the hidden Divinity is formed within us; the word "God," whose sense was at first vague and thin, becomes big with full and definite meaning, not by an addition of new parts and "notes" as in the case of complex notions that are pieced together by the mind; nor by analysis and dissection, as when a complexity is first apprehended confusedly

and then examined in its several details; but as a dim light intensifies, or as a pale uncertain colour deepens and defines itself, or as a feeling of gratitude or of loyalty or any other affection attendant on some apprehension grows with it in tone and strength. For our estimate of a personality is as simple and undefinable an impression as colour, or sound, or heat, or cold. However multiple be the experiences which created it, yet they are not its constituent factors, but its causes; and if there may be much common to the several groups of experiences in two or more cases, yet the resultant impression, being simple, is in each case absolutely distinct and undefinable.[1] Scientific theology builds up what is properly a "notion" of God part by part, just as a critic might sit down and describe Shakespeare's character from his works, building up the word-picture, part by part, into a complex whole. And one might in either case follow intelligently all that was said, and yet *realize* nothing, just because the description is an image, not of the simple impression of the personality, but of the many causes which in combination give birth to that impression.

The great aim of the spiritual life, whether in

[1] A B C and A B D have A B in common; but if each yields a *simple* result, these results will be as unclassifiable as C and D.

the ordinary Christian or in the professed contemplative, is by observation, meditation, and reflection to enrich the significance of the word "God," to crowd ever more and more meaning into its simplicity; so that this very thought alone, apart from all reference to the sources whence it is born and nourished, may evoke a correspondingly simple affection which may be viewed as faith, or hope, according to the circumstances in which it manifests itself. It will be readily admitted by many that man reaches his best in bringing his mind and affections into most perfect harmony with the world of his experience; in slowly building up in his mind an ever fuller, more coherent, and more truthful image of the "All" so far as revealed to him; in contemplating that resulting image with the worthiest and deepest feelings of humble awe, wonder, praise, and love. But in truth this is but a means to another and better conception, through which the mind brings forth in itself an idea, or image, or word of God, in the contemplative love of which it finds its best and most unselfish happiness.

But if the bare thought of a thing delights us, much more will the reality. Were God the mere dream of a poet's brain, such dreaming would make life worth living; yet that worth were but a shadow

of the solid, all-satisfying joy which springs from the knowledge that God *is*, and that the reality transcends all dreams that He has given us the power of dreaming. "*Jesu, dulcis memoria,*" says St. Bernard,—"*Dans vera cordi gaudia,*"

> Jesu, the very thought of Thee
> Can thrill the heart with ecstasy.

But he goes on: "*Sed super mel et omnia, Ejus dulcis præsentia*"—

> But O what sweetness would it be,
> To feel that Thou wert close to me!

For if the idea, the shadow of absent reality, can at times ravish the soul to itself and absorb all other consciousness, far more potent is the present substance of that reality. Even though I know nothing more of an author when I am brought face to face with him than the impression already derived from his works, yet his presence inspires me with a far stronger and more vivid sentiment than I should derive from the mere thought of him; and in like manner a keen realization of the intimate nearness and presence of God in one's own soul, as well as in Nature, makes contemplative acts much more possible, frequent, and sustained than they would be were they dependent simply on the idea or memory of God.

All previous processes, therefore, of asking, seeking, knocking; all our observings, reasonings, reflections upon God's works and doings are valuable chiefly as disposing and preparing us for those moments in which we simply rest and gaze upon the fruit of our labours, upon the simple thought of God Himself which has been slowly generated within us.

In every case the act of love is at least incipiently ecstatic. Were it only a fair landscape, or a sunset, or a dramatic crisis, the mere contemplative joy will in a measure take us out of ourselves and absorb all our consciousness to the annihilation of time. Still more when the sole thought of God has gradually gathered to itself, as to a centre, all the interest and affection attendant upon whatever goodness or lovableness is found in the innumerable creatures in which He manifests Himself, will the mind at times be fascinated to the oblivion of self and of all beside.

As to ecstasy, it is to be noticed, in passing, that it was an error of the Neo-Platonists to treat it almost as the act of a distinct faculty of the mind; distinct from reason or intuition, as reason is from memory; a faculty perhaps latent in all, but undeveloped in most, and the development of which was the mystic's chief aim. But this was to

mistake an action of a recognized type, varied and in some sense we might say, vitiated, by an accidental circumstance, for a new and supernatural kind of action. For, understanding by ecstasy the entire absorption of consciousness by some vivid object, to the destruction of explicit self-consciousness and of all sense of time or of other things, it certainly implies a great intensity of affection and reality of vision in respect to that particular object; but it is not a point of perfection but rather of imperfection that it should weaken consciousness of self and of other things. Darkness is not light. This defect is to be ascribed to the limited nature of our attention, which must be withdrawn from one point if it is to be concentrated on another. We cannot, therefore, suppose that the Beatific Vision of the Saints is strictly ecstatic; on the contrary, there will be the fullest and most perfect self-knowledge and self-consciousness co-existing with the vision of God. For that joy lies in the consciousness of the perfect harmony between God and the soul; of the soul's inmost nature designed to be a receptacle of Divinity, and of God as now filling that receptacle with Himself. It is not a sense of oneness and confusion, or a mere sense of God, but a sense of harmony, of two in one, or rather of many in one, of distinct "other-

ness" in personality and of ineffable "sameness" in mind, love, and life. And as this future consummation of the mystical life is utterly antagonistic to that destruction of personal distinctness and absorption into original nothingness which is the goal of Oriental and even Neo-Platonic aspiration, so the very element of ecstasy which commended it to that school, namely, the element of unself-consciousness, is precisely that which prejudices it in the eyes of the Christian mystic; while contrariwise, what commends it to the latter is the intense consciousness of God which occasions the defect in question; whereas what the others seek is not intense wakefulness of the soul, but the quiet of conscious slumber, the sense of insentience. Thus while the Buddhist allows no ecstasy without sanctity, and no sanctity without ecstasy, the Christian never regards ecstasy as more than a psychical accident, or as even of any particular value as an index of sanctity. For though commonly and roughly it denotes an abnormal intensity of the interior act and, as such, is of frequent occurrence with saints and contemplatives, yet it may very often be simply the result of psychical weakness; while in stronger souls the more intense love may well be perfectly self-possessed and unecstatic. In fine, abstraction, no less than dis-

traction, is a result not of the strength but of the limitation of the human mind.

It may also be noticed that, though sometimes the mere thought of a personality, apart from all reference to any or all of the self-manifestations through which it has become known to us, is a full and sufficient object of intuition and affection; yet more commonly it is by some one or more of these self-manifestations that we are wakened to such recognition and love. Dante is for me a distinct flavour unlike any other; and this perception I can evoke without any conscious reference to any or all of the causes which gave birth to it. Yet undoubtedly it is far more real and vivid and durable when he is, as it were, seen in action or heard in self-utterance. Similarly, for the most part, we need the aid of creatures not only to generate the idea of God within us, but to resuscitate it vividly in memory; we need to view Him in and behind this or that particular manifestation of goodness, wisdom, power, mercy, love, or as clothed with the garment of the entire universe. But it is the peculiarity of the Saints and mystics to be at last independent of these images and instances, and to be drawn directly to the simple thought of God and held there spell-bound, like a wasp so absorbed in the sweetness of the honey

as to be unconscious of the severance of its own body.

Yet it is part of the economy of the Incarnation to minister to the deepest needs of our double nature—of this embodied spirit which embodies its purest thought in images derived from the senses; which embodies its purest love in the warmth of sensible emotion; which speaks and is spoken to through the symbolism of things seen and heard and handled with the hands. If a hatred and contempt of matter and of the body and all connected with it, as proceeding from the principle of evil, characterizes Gnostics, Neo-Platonists, Manicheans, Catharists, Puritans, and kindred schools, it is distinctive of Christ and Catholic Christianity to recognize body and soul as created by God, each in His image and likeness; to view the flesh as the sacrament and expression of the spirit, as the veil through which the spirit is to be approached, informed, elevated, sanctified. For this cause the Word was made Flesh, that in Him we might see the Divinity as far as it can possibly be expressed in finite human nature—the highest created Word of God, which we can realize and understand. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."

Thus the Sacred Humanity of Mary's Son gives

our imagination a figure, wherein we can clothe that "sense of God" which has been formed in our heart and intelligence. Perforce we must either picture God to ourselves man-wise, or else we must call into our imagination some manifestation of His Presence—the fire, or the storm, or the sunset, or the ocean, if we are to steady our mind in its operation. In the Man Christ we can really see God with our imagination, and also see what is the fullest finite revelation of the Divine Love, the form of a servant wherewith God clothed Himself and suffered that He might woo and win the human soul in its own language.

To discard all such imaging of God was a point of perfection with the body-loathing Neo-Platonist; but the Christian mystic uses thankfully and gratefully the help which God's gracious condescension has provided for him in the sacramental subjection of matter to mind, instituted in the very first creation of things and perfected by the Incarnation.

"The School," says Paul Sabatier,[1] "is always more or less the gateway to mysticism; it is possible only to an elect and subtile mind; a pious peasant seldom understands the *Imitation*." This is certainly true to a large extent of Neo-Platonic

[1] *Life of St. Francis*, chap. viii.

mysticism, and of some Christian mystics who have been entangled in that system; also, it is perfectly evident that whatever cultivates the mind aids in securing the natural conditions for contemplation. Still some of the most noted Christian contemplatives have been void of all scholasticism and mental training, and all have approached God through the veil of the Sacred Humanity. Nay, this is Jacob's ladder making an open causeway between earth and Heaven, bridging over the else impassable gulf, and making accessible to the poor and simple, heights never before ambitioned but by the wise and prudent.

The sweetness of the Divine Love as revealed in the Crucified Humanity has spoken more in one single word to many a pure, child-like heart than all the gathered experience and reflection of the wisest could utter. A Kempis speaks to God and listens to God, but it is the God-Man, Christ; for he wrote with a faith far other than Sabatier's, in an age when "God" meant Christ, and summoned up at once the face of the Son of Mary. The *Imitation* may not be the form in which a peasant would express his mystical commerce with God, or under which he would recognize it; but experience is one thing and the successful expression and analysis of that experience is another.

And now we are in a position to deal with some objections to the whole theory and possibility of such contemplation as we have been speaking of. In a chapter on *Plato and the Doctrine of Rest*, one who fairly represents in this matter a large school of current thought, rightly blaming the excesses of the reaction against the Heraclitean doctrine of universal flux, inclines to a contrary excess where he says: "Motion discredited, motion gone, all was gone that belonged to an outward and concrete experience, thus securing exclusive validity to the sort of knowledge, if knowledge it is to be called which corresponds to the 'Pure Being,' that colourless, formless, impalpable existence—*οὐσία ἀχρώματος ἀναφής*—to use the words of Plato."

Again, speaking of "a very abstract, and as it may seem disinterested, certainly uninteresting notion of deity, which is in truth—well! one of the dry sticks of mere natural theology, as it is called," he says: "To think of the deity you must think of it as neither here nor there; then, nor now; you must away with all limitations of time and space and matter, nay, with the very conditions and the limitations of thought itself; apparently not observing that to think of it in this way was in reality not to think of it at all:—that, in short, Being so pure as this, is pure Nothing." And again: "That

most abstract and arid of formulæ, *Pure Being*, closed in indifferently on every side upon itself, and suspended in the midst of nothing, like a hard, transparent, crystal ball." Finally: "The European mind . . . will never be quite sane again. It has been put on a quest (vain quest it may prove to be) after a kind of knowledge perhaps not properly attainable. Hereafter in every age someone will be found to start afresh, quixotically, through what wastes of words! in search of that true Substance, the One, the Absolute, which to the majority of acute people is after all but zero, and a mere algebraic symbol for nothingness. . . . That strange passion for nonentity, to which the Greek was so oddly liable, to which the human mind generally might be thought to have been constitutionally predisposed; for the doctrine of 'The One' had come to the surface before, in old Indian dreams of self-annihilation, which had been revived in the second century after Christ, in the ecstasies (ecstasies of the pure spirit leaving the body behind it) recommended by the Neo-Platonists; and again in the Middle Age, as a finer shade of Christian experience, in the mystic doctrines of Eckhart and Tauler, concerning that union which can only be attained by the literal negation of self, by a kind of moral suicide; of which something

also may be found under the cowl of the monk, in the clear, cold, inaccessible, impossible heights of the book of the *Imitation*."[1] "It is no vague scholastic abstraction that will satisfy the speculative instinct in our modern minds. Who would change the colour or curve of a rose-leaf for the *οὐσία ἀχρώματος ἀσχημάτιστος ἀναφής*—that colourless, formless, intangible being—Plato put so high? For the true illustration of the speculative temper is not the Hindoo mystic, lost to sense, understanding, individuality, but one such as Goethe, to whom every moment of life brought its contribution of experimental individual knowledge, by whom no touch of the world of form, colour, and passion was disregarded."[2]

All this criticism loses sight of a verbally subtle but really vast distinction between two senses of the term *Pure Being*. For it may stand for the last residue of a process of abstraction by which we eliminate, one by one, the differences of things, retaining only what is common; until when every positive determination of an idea has been obliterated nothing remains but the empty frame of a thought. "Pure Being" in this sense is what can be predicated of everything when we want to affirm

[1] *Plato and Platonism*, Edit. 1896, pp. 25, 27, 28, 32.
[2] Pater's *Appreciations* (Coleridge).

as little as possible about it, to assert that it is "not nothing" (*nonnihil*), "mere being." This, the emptiest of all concepts, is infinitely universal just because of its very blankness. Its "purity" is simply negative. Determination or definition both includes and excludes; and the more it includes, the less it excludes. When the inclusion is minimized to a point or zero, then we have this negative notion of Pure Being; but when the inclusion circles out to infinity and when this boundless content is, as it were, fused into one simple perfection—the transcending equivalent of all—then we have the positive conception of Pure Being.

In this positive sense, Pure Being is the most concrete of all conceptions; the result not of abstraction, but of composition; it means the infinite Fulness of Being, and not the indefinite Emptiness of Being. It is not, however, a confused agglomeration of all the perfections and excellences that we see in God's works, in the physical, moral, and spiritual orders; for of these, many are contrary to one another and cannot coexist in one and the same subject; but it is the conception of the simple source whence all these things flow and which must contain and infinitely transcend them all. In that subsistent Perfection all these finite perfections exist in their purity, that is to say, freed from their limits

and determinations so far as these are exclusive of further perfection. There is nothing more strange in our forming within ourselves a notion of God as the hidden source of all being—a notion growing ever richer and deeper as our experience of being enlarges—than in our forming a similarly simple notion of any unknown worker from his manifold works, or of our own secret self from our multitudinous self-manifestations; nor could any conception be less happily described as "colourless, formless, impalpable," "abstract," "uninteresting,"—it being the very contrary of all these. Simple it is, and insoluble into parts; not, however, with the barren simplicity of a point, but with that of a pure colour or of an intense brightness. For as a pure colour is to the eye, so is Pure Being, so is God, to the whole soul. If by "Pure Being" we mean the "emptiness of all definite qualification," then it is "neither here nor there," because it is nowhere; but if we mean the Fulness of Being, then it is "neither here nor there" because it is everywhere; and it is neither "then or now" because it is "everywhen;" and similarly of all contrary and incompatible perfection, it is neither one nor the other, but equivalently and surpassingly both. How these contraries are united in their source we cannot *imagine* distinctly; but surely nothing is more *conceivable*. Even in nature

we see how, for example, man, who is neither mere inorganic matter, nor a plant, nor an animal, gathers all the excellences of these things into a simple unity of a higher order.

Now, as being at the two extreme poles of thought, these opposite conceptions of "Pure Being" enjoy not only the same name, but have many other attributions in common, always, however, understood positively in one case, negatively in the other. Void and Fulness alike are infinite, pure, indeterminable, incomprehensible, ineffable, but in contrary ways and for contrary reasons.

This being so, it is not wonderful if unskilful thinkers and speakers frequently slip unconsciously from one sense to the other, and so confound all things; nor can it be denied that Christian mystics and contemplatives have frequently failed in the analysis of their own mental processes and have laid themselves open to the false charge of nihilism.

Mr. Pater speaks of "the sort of knowledge—if knowledge it is to be called—which corresponds to the 'Pure Being,'" and opposes it to "an outward and concrete experience," and here we must agree with him in his depreciation of the pseudo-mystic contemplation whose object is this void concept, while dissenting from his supposition that there is

no true contemplative knowledge, answering to the positive idea of the Fulness of Being.

The mental act of vision which has for its term that mere skeleton of a thought, with its zero of depth and its infinite monotonous waste of extent, can indeed scarcely be called knowledge at all, fed as it is by the mere husks that remain after every grain of qualification has been extracted from our ideas. In that act of contemplation the mind most nearly attains to conscious annihilation. To think of "nothing," or to see nothing, is the same as not to think, not to see, except so far as "nothing" is invested with a fictitious entity by the mind itself; for the word "nothing" and the idea of "nothing" is something, and can be thought about. In complete unconsciousness there can be no *sense* of rest and quiet; just as we do not enjoy being sound asleep, but only being on the hither or further verge of sound sleep. Could the mind be fixed ecstatically on the void thought of mere *Being*, its activity would be brought to the lowest ebb, to the very verge of unconsciousness, to a sense of negative rest and quiet. Now this is the pseudo-mysticism of the East, and of the quietists of all times and varieties; of those "old Indian dreams of self-annihilation" of which Mr. Pater speaks. The Buddhist, however, unlike the Christian quietist, starts with a principle

which justifies all his ideas of asceticism and mysticism. If all evil and suffering be from desire, and if desire be the necessary expression of separate existence, then separate existence is an evil to be suppressed, and self-obliteration, physical and mental, the repression of distinct thought and desire by the concentration of the mind on the thought of that void, or mere Being, from which we are differenced as ripples from the infinite ocean-plain, is the nearest way to happiness; to the restful consciousness that we are obeying our destiny. Existence is evil, matter is evil, desire is evil, thought is evil—this is the principle that justifies Oriental asceticism and mysticism.

Manifestly it is no easy task to fix the mind's gaze on a thought so void of all interest or attractiveness as is that of mere Being-in-general; as long as there is anything more concrete and full within the field of vision the attention will be spontaneously arrested by the latter, unless the will offers a violent opposition and exerts pressure upon the mind.

Hence such mystics strive as far as possible to empty the mind of all that could disturb or distract it in the way of rational interest or affection or external occupation, and to procure the stillness and retirement needed for so difficult a feat of concentra-

tion, much as we shut our eyes and ears when we desire to bring all our attention to bear on some faint impression or memory. It is because the interest and attractiveness of this barrenest of conceptions is so weak, and cannot in the nature of things be strengthened (since unlike the positive conception of Pure Being, it does not admit of intensification), that a conscious effort is needed to counteract the spontaneous impulse of the mind to fix itself on any more concrete and interesting object. Doubtless the negative hypnotic rest which ensues when all full consciousness is focussed upon this mere point of intelligibility and withdrawn from self and everything else, has the attraction of narcotics and sedatives, which apart from other motives may reward the labour and mortification needed for this voluntary self-extinction; yet it is not an attraction which, like the fervent love of the saints, prevails over every other, but one which can only prevail in so far as all competitors are carefully excluded.

But the mental act which has for its term that richest of all thoughts, "the Fulness of Being," with its indefinite depths of meaning combined with supreme concentration and simplicity, is "knowledge" in the highest and fullest sense of the word; it is the tranquil resting of the mind in the all-

satisfying fruit of its labours, in the truth won at the cost of thinking and comparing and putting together. If to gaze into void is the nearest thing to not thinking at all, to contemplate Fulness is the fullest of all thoughts, the most intense action or self-realization of the soul.

In the measure that the simple thought and name of God grows fuller and more crowded with compressed meaning, it will acquire a greater power of distracting the attention from other things to itself; less and less effort will be needed for these elevations and excesses of the mind, till, as in the case of the greater saints, involuntary ecstasy in which the whole consciousness is gathered into and absorbed by this one thought, realizes a foretaste of the absolute unchanging rest of the face-to-face vision in Heaven. In such an act there is no process, no comparison, no building up or dissecting, but simply the perpetuated wonder and joy of the first shock of vision; and as time goes for nothing when we are conscious but of one thing, there can be no sense of weariness or satiety. Of this contemplative rest and joy in the thought of God St. Augustine writes:

Very sweetly did we speak there alone, and "forgetting things past we stretched forward in thought to the future" and sought between ourselves from that

present Truth (which Thou art), of what kind that eternal life of the saints would be—"which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into man's heart to conceive."

But with our hearts' mouth we were panting for the supernal streams from Thy fountain—that "fountain of life which is with Thee," that bedewed thence, according to the measure of our ability, we might in some way master so great a thought.

And when our discourse had brought us to the conclusion that no pleasure of the bodily senses, how intense soever, or in whatever brilliancy of natural light enjoyed, could seem worthy of mention, let alone comparison, beside the joyousness of that Life; raising ourselves thereunto with still more ardent desire, we passed in order upwards through all bodily things into the very heaven whence the sun, the moon, and the stars shine down upon the earth. And then we rose still higher by internal thought, speaking of Thee and marvelling at Thy works. And then we came to our own minds and passed up beyond them that we might arrive at that land of unfailing richness where with the pasture of Truth Thou feedest Israel for ever, and where "Life" means that Wisdom by which all these things which have been, and shall be, are made; yet itself is not made, but is, even as it was and ever shall be; though more properly "was" and "shall be" are not found therein, but only "is" since it is eternal. For the eternal knows not "was" and "shall be."

And as we were thus speaking and straining after it, for a moment we touched it with the whole force of our heart, and gave a sigh; and then, leaving there this sheaf of the first-fruits of the spirit, we wandered back

to the tumult of our lips, to the word which hath beginning and end. For what is like unto Thy Word, our Lord, which abideth unchanging in Itself and reneweth all things?

We were saying then that if the uproar of one's passions were hushed; hushed also the dreams of earth, air, and ocean; hushed the heavens; and the very soul hushed unto herself, passing out beyond herself and not thinking of herself; and were all visions and pictorial revelations silenced; and all language, and every symbol, and were everything whose very existence is a passing away, altogether silenced for one;—for if one listens these are always saying: "We made not ourselves, but He that abideth for ever hath made us"—were they, having said thus much, forthwith to be silent, straining their listening ears unto Him who hath made them; and were He Himself to speak alone, not through them but by Himself, so that we should hear His word, not uttered with bodily tongue, nor through the voice of an angel, nor through thunder from the clouds, nor through riddle or parable, but were we to hear, apart from these, Himself whom we love in these; and as now we stretch upward and with lightning thought just touch that Eternal Wisdom that abideth over all, could this touch be prolonged, and could all other visions, as of an infinitely lower kind, be withdrawn, so that this one alone might snatch to itself and swallow up and bury its beholder in its most secret joys, and were the unending life to be of the same kind as that moment of intuition for which we sighed, would not this be "entering into the joy of Thy Lord"? *Et istud quando?* And this, O when.[1]

[1] Aug. *Conf.*, l. ix. c. x.

No words could more aptly or beautifully explain the act by which "the soul eternes itself," whether in some brief vision of God as known through creation, or in the unending face-to-face contemplation of the Blessed in Heaven. As the mirror is filled with and becomes the image of what it reflects, so the soul that sees God brings forth in itself the likeness of God: "When He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." Our whole end in life is to bring forth this image or word of God in our thought more and more fully and perfectly; to see God; to know God, not with a notional, speculative knowledge such as a man might have of what he has never felt or even imagined, but with a real knowledge that comes of intimate contact, as real as our knowledge of our own personality which we cannot doubt, yet cannot analyze or define.

And this "real" knowledge of God is inseparably identified with love. For it is to the whole soul what a harmony, or a fragrance, or a rich colour is to the particular sense in question—an object which, by eliciting a full and perfect act of perception, causes rest and satisfaction and joy. And in the love of God, and of things god-like and divine, all virtue and holiness is summed up.

But for us here on earth this love of things

god-like and divine, this rest and repose of the mind, as it realizes in itself and contemplates the existence of justice, truth, order, beauty, and all manner of goodness, and of Divine self-manifestation in finite things, is not so much a consequence as a cause of the love of God, that is, of the joyful repose of the mind as it contemplates the existence of God, in whom justice, truth, order, beauty, and all manner of goodness subsists in absolute simplicity, and infinite perfection.

We are not as those Blessed ones who see God's face directly, and who are therefore reminded of it by every hint and suggestion of that Beauty which is reflected from the meanest creature upon which He has lifted up the light of His countenance. We are not carried back in thought to something already experienced, but forward to something as yet only dimly imagined and hoped for. We begin by loving these scattered rays of Divine Beauty before we can focus them to a point in which their brilliancy is concentrated, or trace them upwards as they converge to their common source above. We have no "real" knowledge of God whatever in this life except so far as we have tasted and loved His sweetness as shared by creatures, and have referred all to Him as to the first author.

III.

Just in the measure that we have experienced, felt, and loved human intelligence, wisdom, grace, justice, pity, affection, fidelity, and every other moral and spiritual excellence; and just in the measure that we have studied and entered into sympathy with the Divinity manifested in creatures, shall we be capable of a "real" knowledge or love of God. No doubt the notional concept of God as Infinite First Being is the same for the man of little internal experience, and for the man of great internal experience, provided each clearly apprehend the abstract terms. The outline is the same; but the colouring, how different! The statement of a man's death has the same "notional" force for the casual reader of the newspaper obituary, as for his wife, or mother, or child; but for these latter the "real" meaning is immeasurably full, while for the former it is simply zero. Such is the difference in significance of the dogmatic statement: "God exists," to the mere theologian or philosopher, and to one who by actual personal experience has learnt to taste and touch and handle and relish the Divinity as communicated to creatures and to recognize it as from God.

A certain purification or refinement of the intelligence and heart is therefore a condition for seeing God; not a sterile, negative purification advocated by the false mysticism whose God is the very ghost of an abstraction, a mere *non-nihil*, whose contemplation hypnotizes the mind, but a positive purification which consists in the exclusion of darkness by the introduction of every kind of light, and in the exclusion of selfish, base, and impure love by the cultivation of the highest, widest, purest, and deepest love; which consists, in other words, in the highest development of our highest faculties; in the consequent growth of our power of appreciation.

A man who is unjust, ungenerous, untruthful, not through frailty falling short of his ideals, but through lack of appreciation, how will such a one love these things in God? What attraction will God have for him? Look at it how we will, our own heart is the mirror in which we see God.

And this brings up the practical question of the conditions favourable to contemplative love, and to the formation of an ever truer and worthier image of God in the mind. Owing largely to the almost inevitable likeness of terminology used in the expression of the false mysticism and the true, it must be confessed that according as the mind in

its confusion has wavered between conceptions so opposite (albeit analogous and correlative), the practical conclusions and issues have been vitiated by a like hesitancy and inconsistency; and we find the Christian mystic at times, in particular matters, enunciating and acting on principles which belong to Oriental pessimism or nihilism, and are quite incompatible with those by which he is governed in the main—principles proper to that uncatholic puritanism which is disposed to regard all human interests, all secular knowledge and science, all experience of the senses, all phantasms of the imagination, all works of art and industry, all natural affections and emotions, anything other than the direct thought of God and the supernatural, which could in any way occupy the soul's attention, with a sort of jealous suspicion, and inclined to obviate the danger, not by temperance but by total abstinence; not by using these things to lead us to God, but by discarding them altogether, and striving to occupy the mind and heart with the thought of God alone. This is, of course, to forget that we can in this life have no "real" thought of God but such as has been created, nourished, and fed from our intelligence and experience of ourselves and other creatures; that the mere "notional" conception of God is, apart

from such feeding and nourishing, but a barren symbol for a value unknown; a skeleton thought without flesh or warmth or vitality; something whose contemplation can do little more than hypnotize the mind into a state of negative rest nigh to death, but cannot waken, quicken, and thereby rest and satisfy its utmost energies in an act of breathless, eternal, infinite wonder. A *régime* that would thus stunt the mind and affection, and remove the very soil from which alone the idea of God can spring up and draw nutriment and increase, belongs properly to the mysticism of the Buddhist who is seeking rest in the minimum of spiritual activity through the fixed contemplation of Infinite Void.

But on the whole, in spite of occasional slips and slidings from one to another of those contrary conceptions which lurk under an almost identical language, the Christian mystics have held fast to the truth that the way to God is through creatures, and the perfection of God's image in the soul involves the very fullest development, the *positive* purification of its highest faculties, and of the entire man, soul and body.

According to the possibilities of the age and country, we find reading, research, scientific and literary studies, fine arts and useful handicrafts

flourishing in those homes of contemplation to whose shelter we owe the preservation, the advance, and even the creation of many of these elements of civilization and rational development. Augustine, Jerome, Basil, Gregory, Bernard, Aquinas, Anselm,—these and a hundred other names are not less associated with all the learning and life of their day than with contemplative prayer of the highest order. Not that they were all mystics, in so far as that word implies a certain involuntary rapture in which the whole attention is wrested from everything else by the thought of God; for this depends on the sensibility and responsiveness of the affection which sometimes is least where the spiritual light is greatest, and conversely; so that many love the little they know of God far more vehemently than others love the much they know of Him. But those of whom we speak were men who, however they may have been self-possessed and masters of their affection, yet had a singularly real, rich, and massive sense of God.

If retirement from the world into the desert or the cloister is almost invariably considered a condition of a life of contemplation, yet the motive is not, as with the Buddhist, to starve the soul, but to fill it; it is to withdraw it from battening on the husks that it may feed upon the bread of angels. It is

because for the most part the cares of ordinary life belittle the soul and render thought difficult and impossible that retreat is in many cases a *sine qua non* for the leisured consideration needed for a life of close communion with God. As to the necessity and social utility of such a class of devotees we have spoken elsewhere. Our immediate point is that the retreat of the Christian mystic is not from life to death; from mental and moral activity to inaction; but from a lower and thinner to a fuller and higher life; from dissipation to concentration of energy.

Nor in the abandonment of wife and children, in the love and service of whom the best affections and virtues in normal cases are elicited and strengthened, is the Christian mystic influenced by a desire of narrowing his affections as though he could love God better for loving man less; but his aim and hope is to put on an affection which is not diluted but strengthened for being world-wide like that of God's own heart, to which it is attuned: and to find in the Church and in the universal human family what others find in the few members of a single household.

Since it is by the mind and the heart that God is apprehended and loved, whatever tends to the expansion and purification of these faculties disposes

us for contemplation. The mind is expanded in the measure that it is fed with all manner of knowledge, the fruit of experience and of reflection upon experience—our own and that of others. And it is purified not only from the negative stain of darkness and ignorance—for this were but another aspect of its expansion—but from all positive error of credulity or doubt, from all bias and prejudice; from all that would clog the smoothness of its operations, or hinder its upward flight. The heart is expanded by every increase of sympathy with the mind and heart of God in regard to persons or things to which any measure of the Divine Goodness has been communicated; and it is purified by the orderly harmonizing of all these affections under the dominion of its master-affection for the Divine Goodness, unalloyed and in itself; and by the casting out of all selfishness and weakness and whatever could debase or dissipate its best and highest energies.

So far as God's attributes are revealed to us through creatures by whom they are shared, the more we study the creature the more we shall know of the Creator. If, for example, in the *Benedicite* and similar acts of divine praise we bless God and love Him for the wisdom, goodness, power, and beauty displayed in His works, the more we know

of those works the fuller our praise will be. Thus, the sacred poet is not content to say: "All ye works of the Lord bless ye the Lord," and there to make an end. That were far too vague and notional a concept to move hearts of flesh. But he proceeds to unfold the contents of this notion and to enumerate God's works in detail. Yet, when all is done, he still leaves us with but classes and species which admit of indefinite unfolding. How much more will "sun, moon, stars" mean for the astronomer than for another who has not given his life to communion with those wondrous immensities! Similarly, rain, dew, winds, hoar-frost, ice, snow, light, darkness, cloud, lightning, mountains, hills, flowers, birds, beasts, seas, streams, will each mean for one very little; for another an immeasurable wealth of divine revelation, according to the experience, observation, reflection of the contemplative. What does *universa germinantia in terra* (everything that sprouts up from the soil) mean for one born and bred in city slum? and what for one accustomed to make the flowers his calendar? "Ice and snow" will suggest to some little more than miscomfort; but to other minds they will summon up the glory of Alpine heights or the terror of Arctic winters. Every river by whose banks we have wandered; every hour we have mused by the seashore; every

gentle breeze we have inhaled; every tempestuous wind which has swept over us; every cloud that our eye has traced and followed; every dawn and sunset whose splendour we have marked; every bird whose song we have listened to, whose plumage we have noted; every living creature whose form and action and instinct have filled us with wonder—all these observations and experiences combine to expand the mind and to crowd more and more meaning into the words of the *Benedicite*, and thereby to add depth and richness to our sense of God and to the praise we render Him. Nor is this less but more true when in the same hymn we pass from the non-moral to the rational and moral world and bless God for a new order of self-manifestations accorded us in the mind and heart of man. The more we know of humanity at large (*Filii hominum*), of the nature and history of man, the deeper and more detailed our knowledge, the richer will be our praise. So, too, the more we know of Israel, the Church of God, and of the souls of the just on earth, and of the saints in heaven, the more will our words be pregnant with sense, the less will our prayer be meagre and barren.

This we have said to illustrate what we mean by that general expansion of the mind so helpful to contemplation in the Christian sense of the term.

It follows, as a matter of course, that whatever cultivates and furnishes the mind is of the highest importance. To starve the mind and then to lock it up in a cell to contemplate God would be to expect bricks without straw. It was precisely so far as the highest and best culture could not be secured in the hurry and multifariousness of a worldly life that contemplatives have fled from an atmosphere prejudicial in most cases to mental growth; but in no wise did they desire to cut themselves off from the sources of spiritual nourishment.

Nor is it only as supplying the mind with matter for building up its idea of God that all this experience, information, and study are needed; but also as contributing to that work of mental purification, discipline, mortification and restraint, without which the luxuriant fulness of our thought generates confusion rather than truth, and carries us along like drifting straws in its wild currents. For of these two elements, fulness and restraint, all life and perfection, whether of body, heart or mind, is woven.

There is a discipline in abstract philosophy, in mathematics, in positive and historic investigation, in literary construction and criticism, in the fine arts, in useful handicrafts, which purifies the mind from error, quickens its powers of observation,

insight and reason, and makes it pliant, subtle, and strong in dealing with the matter presented to it. And in the measure that mystic contemplation is from its very nature as far as possible removed from the category of what is called "exact thought," dealing as it does with objects necessarily beyond the comfortable grasp of the mind, and belonging in some sort to the world of ideas which we construct for ourselves out of materials derived from the world of experienced realities, this healthy commerce with the concrete and the exactly verifiable is all the more needful if the intellect is to keep its balance.

But in all this, the means must be measured to the end, and the end not forgotten in the means. We can gather more manna than we shall ever need: we can overload our mind with experience beyond what we can digest and assimilate. Prayer, and not mental culture, is the contemplative's end, and if it is helped by a due measure, it is choked by an excess of the means.

Nor have these means been ever wholly neglected in the monasteries of contemplatives; though of course they were not always and everywhere as abundant and readily accessible as in our own days, nor was their direct bearing on contemplation, apart from their indirect value as a recreation and diversion of the mind, always explicitly adverted to.

The advantage of some measure of this discipline, this asceticism and mortification of the intellect, is evident when we consider the excesses and delusions that may arise and have arisen from spiritual excitement and intoxication in the case of certain visionaries and ecstatics.

It is plain that a life of thought and contemplation tends to destroy the rightly balanced distribution of the vital powers between mind and body, and to produce that anarchy of the nervous system—the borderland where the two territories blend—which results in hysteria and other kindred disorders. This unbalance may be caused by an habitual diversion of energies to either side, to the impoverishment of the other; so that hysteria or hysterical phenomena mark excesses of animalism and excesses of spiritualism alike. Often, moreover, there is a constitutional predisposition, one way or the other, which can be developed or counteracted by one's pursuits in life. Also, there are at times in the same subject sudden reactions, back-swings of the pendulum, struggles of injured nature to right herself and rest in the mean. All these well-known phenomena point to the necessity of that mastery over the workings of the mind and imagination which can be largely secured by studies that involve method, concentration, criticism,

freedom from heat and commotion, such as some branch of positive science or of historical inquiry which brings the mind into sobering contact with fact and reality.

Still more obvious is the necessity of counteracting the excessive strain put upon the cerebro-nervous system by a life of contemplation, and of securing that perfect health of body without which the health of the mind is so gravely imperilled. Apart from those austerities which the saints have assumed in a spirit of penance and expiation, there is a certain severity and bodily asceticism which has always been recognized as conducing to mental efforts of the higher sort; nor is it to be supposed that health means the fullest possible degree of physical development. But any notorious defiance of the conditions of a sound nervous system, opens the door to hysterical ailments and morbid illusions.

And besides this expansion and enrichment of the mind and its purification from error and illusion, we have to attend assiduously to the expansion and purification of the heart and affections. It is only in proportion to our experience of loving and of being loved, and that, in the highest, painfullest, most unselfish way, that we increase our power of loving God and our desire of being loved by Him in return. And here again

the superficial resemblance between the detachment advocated by Oriental pessimism and that which is approved by Christian mysticism covers an immeasurable antagonism of principle and spirit. Christ says: "He that loves father or mother, son or daughter, husband or wife, brother or sister, more than Me, is not worthy of Me," and demands a readiness to forsake all rather than forsake the interests of God and of our own soul. This is a matter of grave or lesser obligation, or one merely of counsel, according to the matter in regard to which the love of God and the love of our near ones or neighbours come in conflict. Inhuman as it sounds to faithless ears, this doctrine is only what all confess when they say that for no personal affection may we sacrifice principle, truth, justice, or any other eternal interest; it is the sentiment we applaud in: "I could not love thee half so well, loved I not honour more." Indeed these lines give us the true solution of the seeming difficulty. Natural affections are not weakened but strengthened and developed in their purest form by being kept in their right place, namely, subject to the overruling love of God, the Eternal Reason and Truth and Honour.

Matter and force are spiritualized so far as the work of spirit is put into them—so far as, impregnated

with idea and thought and form, they are delivered from the passiveness, grossness, and shapelessness, which is implied in the expressions: "brute matter" and "brute force." And "carnal" affection similarly is spiritualized, when it is restrained, shaped, and directed by intelligence and light. Obeyed blindly and passively, these affections quickly degenerate and expend themselves unprofitably, dragging the whole character down to the gutter. They are but a form of "selfishness" in the bad sense of yielding to the stronger inclination without thinking if it be the better; that is, without referring it to the law of reason which is the law of Divine love—of the love of what is Divine. The affection which cannot bear pain or inflict pain in the interest of higher claims; the affection of weakly self-indulgence which sacrifices the higher good of the beloved one to present mutual gratification; which cannot enter into the mind of Christ, whose severe love did not spare the Heart of His Mother pierced with the sword of separation; such affection is carnal, corruptible, and evanescent; and it is only by the refining influence of restraint and mortification that it can be shaped and spiritualized and thereby redeemed. When a man in his loving is really dead to all worldly and selfish considerations and awake only to those that are divine; when he loves friends and

relatives and neighbours for what is really best and most lovable in them; when he recognizes the unshaped, natural drawings of his heart as from God, and therefore not to be profaned by misuse but perfected by right use; when in loving them he is by interpretation loving Christ whose they are, and when in loving Christ he is loving them; when, in a word, his natural affection is lit up with Divinity, then indeed his heart has first learnt what love means.

Thus the perfect love of man leads to the perfect love of Christ, and conversely. So intimately do they act and react, that they may be regarded as two phases of one love. If then the Christian solitary leaves his home for the closer service of Christ, it is only in the spirit in which a man may leave his family for years to go and earn for them in a foreign land. They might weakly wish to keep him; he might weakly wish to stay; but the higher love demands the mutual sacrifice.

Undoubtedly the continual close proximity of those to whom we are deeply attached may have a narrowing, exclusive influence upon our affections, and not only hinder our loving others as we ought, but our loving them with a discerning and intelligent regard. Emotional intensity gathers up the rays of our attention and centres them on a single

point. Moreover, the assimilative force of that emotion makes us disposed to conform ourselves even blindly to the pattern of those we love, and to approve in them what we did not previously approve. Hence it is always a gain to stand away for a time, to calm excited feeling and to see things clearly, that our love may be based on no illusion blinding us to the defects of those we love and to the perfections of others. It is a higher love that does not depend on illusion or fear disillusion in either respect.

While, therefore, the Buddhist seeks to eradicate every natural affection, the Christian seeks to strengthen and purify it, and to use it as means of developing all that is best in his heart, and so increasing his capacity of loving God. Mortification here, as elsewhere, is common to both systems; but in the one it is death for the sake of death; in the other, death for the sake of fuller and richer life. The Christian withdraws from his family that he may love them more deeply and truly and at the same time extend his love as wide as that of the Heart of Christ.

The striking superficial resemblance between the retirement of the Buddhist monk or hermit and that of the Christian contemplative or mystic covers a substantial difference of infinite moment. Death

is the keynote of one system, life that of the other. The Christian withdraws himself from the petty activities of external life in the interests of a life of action, whose fruitfulness and utility is indirect, but more abundant and far-reaching,—a thought unintelligible and paradoxical to those who ignore the omnipotence of idea,—who measure utility by material productiveness, or some equally tangible result. He designs to live not less but more fully, to lose his life in a lower sense that he may gain it in a higher. His cell is the grave of his narrower, unworthy self, but it is the cradle of his truer and wider self.

To say that through Neo-Platonic influence this vital distinction has never been lost sight of, would be to fly in the face of known facts; to say that it is not clearly contained in the utterances of Catholic saints and teachers, when they are combating pseudo-mysticism and quietism in its various forms, and are so forced to a closer consideration of the matter, is no less a deviation from truth.

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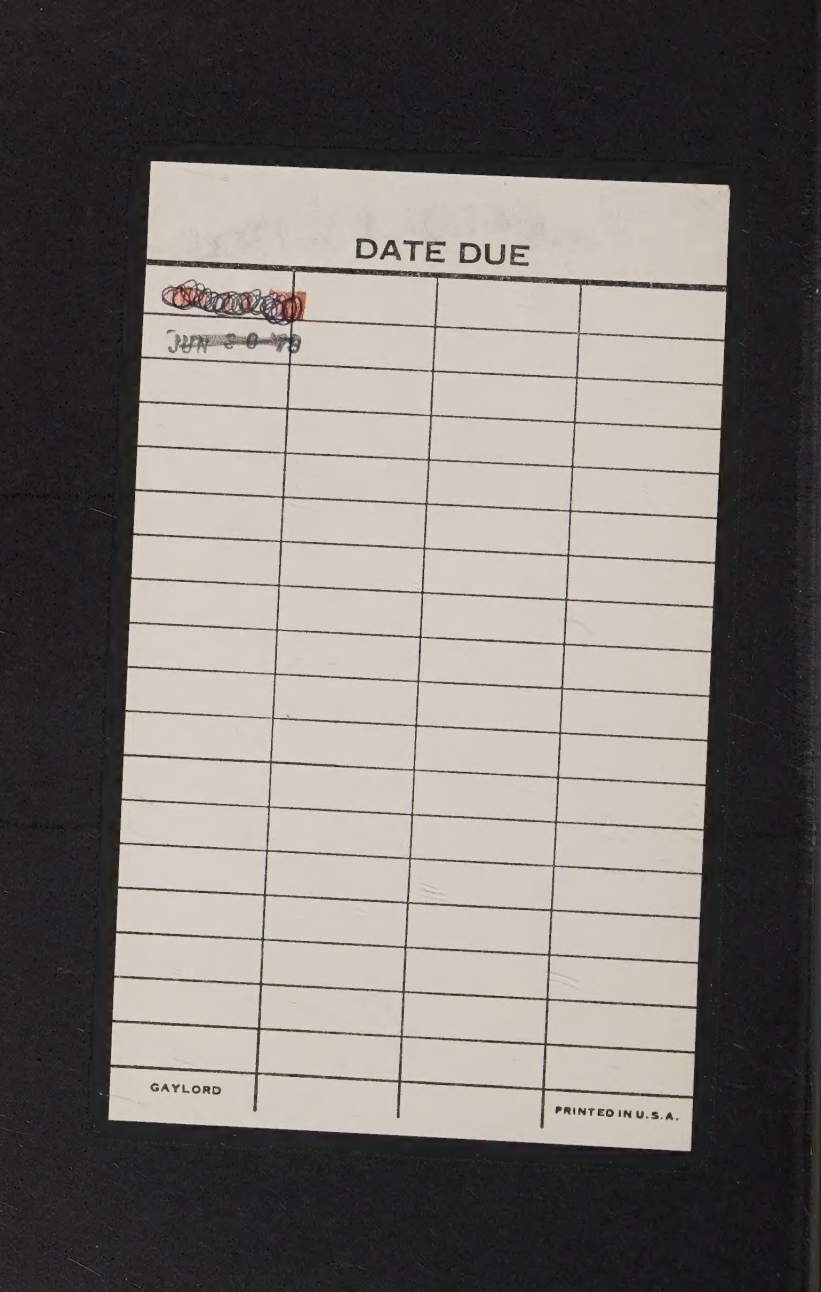
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